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THIS WEEK ON CHICAGOREADER.COM



Movie Tuesday: Milos Stehlik

Five films released for home viewing by the Facets Multimedia cofounder.



Easy baked

This edition of To Be Blunt offers a foolproof cannabis edibles recipe.



Your favorite alt-weekly is up for two national awards

The Reader received two Association of Alternative Newsmedia nominations for best feature story and one for the Block Beat.

It's not easy being a parent, but here's something simple you can do. Spend two minutes twice a day making sure they brush; it could help save them from a lifetime of tooth pain. Make it fun, text MOUTH to 97779 to join the 2MIN2X Challenge.



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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

I just need a minute!

Get away from the rest of us at these secluded Chicago spots.

IN A CITY full of distractions, we often find ourselves wanting to feel alone and surrounded by nothing but quiet. If you can't quite afford to get to Bora Bora, here are some calmer-than-most spots closer afield where a person can think and just get a minute.

Get a room at the library

Savvy readers like you have probably already heard of the virtues of the Winter Garden at the Harold Washington branch of the Chicago Public Library, but did you know that you can also book your own private study room? You need to schedule in advance, but thankfully you can do so in person at the reference desk on the fifth, sixth, or seventh floors. You might be able to walk in and book a room immediately if there aren't a lot of previously scheduled appointments that day. I was able to do this during the December holiday season one year and spent my two hours addressing my New Year's cards and reading *Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior*, which helped me navigate the turbulent waters of family parties. There are study rooms available in some of the branches as well.

South Shore Natural Area

While the South Shore Cultural Center is a must-see historical building and frequent pick of fabulous-on-a-budget brides, it's also an active community center offering top-notch programming for the neighborhood and beyond. One of the highlights of this public resource is the six-acre Natural Area, a preserve within South Shore Park filled with wetlands, woodlands, prairie, amazing birds, and ample quiet spots. It's a microcosm of Illinois habitats in the middle of our city, and one of the few places you might be able to walk unaccompanied by others. The sanctuary starts at 71st Street, and you can get away from the rest of us every day from 6 AM till 11 PM.

I like people, but I love when they shut up

If you can deal with being around others, but just want everyone to tone it down for a few minutes, there are a surprising number of Chicago spots where citizens seem to coexist in relative silence. During sunny weekday afternoons, take a break downtown at the South Garden outside of the Art Institute of Chicago. When you hit it after the lunch rush (I've had good luck around 3 PM) you'll still be in the midst of a crowd, but the great majority of your fellow garden lovers will usually be wearing headphones and/or quietly contemplating their lives. You'll get to sit near a Lorado Taft sculpture and catch a bit of shade. —**SALEM COLLO-JULIN**

NEWS & POLITICS



Bret Stephens © CHRIS MICHEL/FICKR

POLITICS

Right-wing snowflakes

To fend off accusations of bias, *NYT* columnist Stephens plays the victim card.

By BEN JORAVSKY

Not long ago, Bret Stephens, the right-of-center columnist for the *New York Times*, wrote a column about the Democratic presidential debates that managed to offend, insult, and denigrate immigrants, Spanish-speaking residents, Democratic taxpayers, and anyone who gets their health care from the Veterans Administration.

Take it away, Mr. Stephens...

"What conclusions should ordinary people draw about what Democrats stand for, other than a thunderous repudiation of Donald Trump, and how they see America, other than as a land of unscrupulous profiteers and hapless victims? Here's what: a party that makes too many Americans feel like strangers in their own country. A party that puts more of its faith, and invests most of its efforts, in them instead of us.

"They speak Spanish. We don't. They are not U.S. citizens or legal residents. We are. They broke the rules to get into this country.

We didn't. They pay few or no taxes. We already pay most of those taxes. They willingly got themselves into debt. We're asked to write it off. They don't pay the premiums for private health insurance. We're supposed to give up ours in exchange for some V.A.-type nightmare."

In short, Spanish speakers are law-breaking freeloaders who drive up our taxes and are coming to take away our health care.

When Stephens got the angry response he should have anticipated, he doubled down. He wrote a second column in which he likened his critics to an angry mob—"latter-day Robespierres"—marching him to the guillotine.

In short, he played the victim card.

I wasn't surprised. If I had a nickel for every time a conservative played the victim card, I'd have enough money to afford the sterling health care plan Stephens probably gets from the *New York Times*.

I know this because I read right-wingers all the time. Not just Stephens, but also David ➔

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continued from 5

Brooks and Ross Douthat—his ideological sidekicks at the *NYT*—and the editorial board at the *Tribune* and Joel Pollak at Breitbart. Man, I’m such a glutton for punishment, I even subscribe to e-mail updates from the Tea Party.

I do this because 1) every now and then, one of them, even Stephens, actually writes something that almost sort of makes sense.

And 2) it’s good to know what they’re up to. You know, to see what surreal spin they’re putting on reality.

Speaking of which, I just got another e-mail update from the Tea Party . . .

“BREAKING NEWS! Whoa! Pervert Jeffrey Epstein Flew Clintons To Orgy Island—Robert Mueller Was Involved . . . Read the latest now on TeaParty.org.”

OK. Anyway, back on planet earth . . .

As a regular reader of right-wingers raving, I can tell you that one of their favorite obsessions is political correctness.

The right hates political correctness. Unless, of course, they’re practicing it. Then they can’t get enough.

A day rarely passes without some right-winger somewhere bawling like a baby over a perceived insult, insensitivity, or slight from the left.

Criticize bakers in Indiana or Colorado who refuse to make wedding cakes for gay marriages?

You’ve denigrated their religious beliefs.

Defend Colin Kaepernick’s right to not stand for the national anthem?

You’ve insulted the brave service members of the U.S. Armed Forces—even if some of those brave service members applaud Kaepernick’s stand.

Condemn the tactics of overzealous border guards?

You’ve disrespected first responders everywhere.

Slam Alex Jones for spreading vile stories that say nobody died at Sandy Hook?

You’re insensitive to his First Amendment rights.

Criticize Kellyanne Conway and Sarah Huckabee Sanders for lying?

You’re a misogynist.

Criticize Kanye West for sucking up to Trump?

You’re racist (unless you’re Black—then you’re a slave on the Democratic plantation).

I’m telling you, these right-wingers have an answer for everything.

When Milo Yiannopoulos makes fat jokes about Leslie Jones, it’s free expression. When Michelle Wolf cracks wise about Sarah Huckabee Sanders, it’s fat shaming.

Got it?

At the risk of resorting to stereotypes that reduce all right-wingers to caricatures (and I would never, ever want to do that), it seems to me that conservatives, like Stephens, are trying to guilt-trip lefties, like me, into “self-silencing.”

Which is what Stephens says lefties are trying to do to him. Hmm, I believe Dr. Freud calls that “projection.”

At times, it gets absurd. Think about it—Trump controls the White House, the Senate, the Supreme Court, and a good chunk of TV news. And yet Stephens wants to be viewed as a powerless victim of left-wing tyrants. As do Yiannopoulos and Conway and Trump, for that matter.

In his defense, Stephens claims he was misunderstood. That is, the opinions he expressed about “us” and “them” were not his.

No, no—he was merely trying “to channel the negative way ‘ordinary people’ might have viewed last week’s Democratic debates.”

In which case, let’s add “ordinary people” to the list of people Stephens has denigrated.

Look, Mr. Stephens, if those weren’t your opinions, you should have done a better job of making that point more clearly. Otherwise, don’t get all snowflaky when people call you a bigot.

Frankly, I’m surprised some editor at the *Times* didn’t ask Stephens to insert a disclaimer sentence along the lines of “I know these views may be offensive, but it’s how ordinary people would react.”

Perhaps Stephens has the good liberals at the *Times* so intimidated that they’re afraid to make any editorial suggestions for fear of being compared to Robespierre.

I never said conservatives weren’t clever. Their support for free expression, like their opposition to political correctness, isn’t rooted in any underlying principle.

Both are merely tactics in a larger political game intended to fire up the base and intimidate the opposition.

Hold it—this just in from the Tea Party . . .

“Ocasio-Cortez Said In Front Of Border Guards, ‘Oh, All These Guys In Here Are Going To F**k Me!’”

Like I was saying . . .

 @joravben



#WalkAway Campaign town hall event June 29 at the City Hall in the West Loop

 COURTESY BRANDON STRAKA

ON CULTURE

Just #WalkAway

A dramatic confrontation between a right-wing political group and Theater Wit ends up on YouTube.

By DEANNA ISAACS

What might have been the biggest drama of Chicago’s recent Pride Weekend played out at Theater Wit—but not onstage.

When artistic director Jeremy Wechsler canceled an event scheduled by #WalkAway Campaign, a New York-based right-wing political group, a mere day before the event was to happen, he launched a highly politicized reality show in which he became a major player.

It was, well, unwitting. And so histrionic that his nemesis, #WalkAway founder Brandon Straka, found it necessary to post a follow-up video on Facebook apologizing for his own behavior. Not toward Wechsler and Theater Wit, however. Them, he’s threatened to sue.

You can still catch the drama on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

#WalkAway is a mostly online, not-yet-nonprofit entity whose mission is to convince LGBT and other minority-group voters

to give up their traditional loyalty to the Democrats. It was founded a little over a year ago by Straka, a hairstylist, actor, gay man, and reformed liberal who catapulted to conservative media fame after his six-minute Facebook video detailing his political conversion was retweeted by Donald Trump Jr. It’s been funded by donations (originally on GoFundMe, where it raised \$367,000), including a \$10,000 contribution by conspiracy theorist Alex Jones.

#WalkAway recently ventured into live town hall programs held in New York (viewable online) and Los Angeles. In a phone interview last week, Straka said that after those events, #WalkAway was contacted by the Illinois chapter of the LGBT group Log Cabin Republicans, who asked the group to bring a town hall to Chicago for Pride Weekend, then just three weeks away. Straka said Log Cabin Republicans offered to facilitate the event and arranged to rent one of the black-box theaters at Theater Wit, which allows community organizations to use its

NEWS & POLITICS

space for free. It was scheduled for June 29.

After that, Straka said, communication with Log Cabin Republicans broke down; when they didn't promptly return calls, #WalkAway decided to do the Chicago town hall on its own. Representatives informed Theater Wit of the change, signed a contract, and—since its nonprofit status is not yet official—paid a rental fee. According to #WalkAway executive director Libby Albert, the rental fee was \$950 and the contract had no provisions for cancellation except in instances of “natural disaster or an act of God.”

#WalkAway flew its team—Straka, Albert, and others, including its provocative panelists, gay activist Mike Harlow and YouTuber Blaire White—to Chicago. During a June 28 walk-through at the theater, Straka said they warned the assistant manager, Josh Nordmark, that they'd be releasing the event location that day, and that there could be pushback from the community. (#WalkAway's New York town hall had to be relocated after its original venue, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center there, succumbed to public pressure after receiving a letter of protest signed by 280 people and canceled it.) Straka says the group was assured that Theater Wit would not cancel.

But a few hours later, #WalkAway team member Melissa Robey got a call from Wechsler, who told her that he had, in fact, decided to pull the plug. She and Albert captured the call on a cell-phone video (illegal in Illinois unless both parties to a private conversation agree), and it's now part of the online drama available on YouTube. As the video rolls, Wechsler can be heard explaining that he'd checked out their panelists and found that “this is a little too close to hate speech for my taste.” When Robey and Albert object, telling him, “You're shutting down our First Amendment rights to free speech,” Weschler replies,

“You don't have First Amendment rights here at the theater. You can say whatever you want, just not here.”

Straka and Harlow rushed back to the theater, where they confronted Wechsler. They also recorded this scene on a cell phone. It's a painful interlude in which Wechsler struggles to find the right words, finally concluding, “I guess I'm just not interested in contributing to the political debate in the way that you guys are doing it.” Straka and Harlow object, claiming that they're being canceled because of misperceptions and lies and that Wechsler hasn't even bothered to watch the video of their previous town hall to see what it is that he's canceling. When Straka reveals that he has his lawyer on the phone, it's Wechsler who does the “walk away.”

There's more: a subsequent confrontation with Nordmark and a Twitter video, posted by Straka, in which he notes that he's just filed a police report because a Theater Wit employee grabbed his phone to stop him from recording. Still, Straka told me, it ended well. A new venue turned up—the City Hall, a bar and event space in the West Loop, where, he says, about 150 people showed up for an “incredible” event. (An employee from City Hall says the venue doesn't have a crowd count.) His lawyer, Manny Alicandro, says that it seems like “effective notice” wasn't given by Theater Wit, but what he's most interested in is “why the cancellation occurred” and its effect on the reputation and future of Straka's organization. Straka has filed suit against the New York Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center for its cancellation of the town hall there, charging discrimination and defamation.

Theater Wit, citing the “potential for litigation in this matter,” declined to comment. 

 @Deannalsaacs

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Clockwise from top left:
Tapsilog, one of Subo's
silog breakfast plates;
lechon kawali; pancit
palabok; salmon sinigang;
tortang talong, Ilocano
eggplant omelet

ALEXIS O'CONNOR



Lumpia (top); chicken adobo ALEXIS O'CONNOR



nearly 40 years ago, across the street from nearby Horner Park.

The Menors suspect theirs was Chicago's first Filipino restaurant, though according to Sarahlynn Pablo in the *Chicago Food Encyclopedia*, a restaurant called the Manila Village Cafe served the city's first Filipinos back in the 30s. That said, an early 80s opening clearly places Three R's among Chicago's first *turo-turo* ("point-point") cafeteria-style restaurants, which started popping up to attend to the wave of Filipino immigrants arriving in the 60s and 70s, many of whom found work in the health care industry during a time when the federal government was far more welcoming.

Minda, who arrived in the late 70s from the little town of Echague in the northwestern province of Isabela (where you'll find dinuguan Ilocano), started her career as a social worker but was driven to commerce, starting in the early 80s with Ric-Ron, a small grocery at Grand and Laramie on the west side, stocked with imports from back home that would interest the Pinoy nurses and techs working at nearby (and long since gone) Saint Anne's Hospital. In 1982, the year Rod was born (the third son after Ric and Ron), she opened Three R's on Montrose, just west of the river from what is now Kindred Hospital Chicago North.

Eventually Minda hired cooks and started offering ready-to-go Filipino food served from

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Subo Filipino Kitchen is Albany Park's answer to a Pinoy wave

The mother and son behind the late Three Rs Filipino Cafe have regrouped at the Brown Line's terminus.

By **MIKE SULA**

Chocolate meat is on the menu every day at Albany Park's Subo Filipino Kitchen. If you happen to jump off at the Brown Line's terminus with a taste for *dinuguan*, the thick, fortifying, iron-rich blood stew of the Philippines—sanguineous pork butt, snout, and stomach lit up with an acidic spark of rice vinegar—you need only turn your anemic bones a half block south on Kimball Avenue. If you have an even more particular hankering for *dinuguan* Ilocano, a drier, less gravylike regional variant, the cooks can do that too, but only if you're having a party.

Mother and son Minda and Rod Menor targeted the heavy foot traffic around this small strip mall and launched Subo eight months ago, after they closed the Three R's Filipino Cafe, which Minda opened in Albany Park



steam tables behind glass sneeze guards, in a space separate from a grocery section. It featured a constant repertoire of 20 to 25 dishes prepared for decades by her longtime chefs Felipa Perez and Elsa Alvarez. The former hails from Michoacán, but she learned to cook Pinoy cuisine from Perez, who comes from Santa Rosa, south of Manila, where the food is richer, meatier, and more reflective of colonial Spanish influence than the Ilocano fare Minda grew up on—simpler, leaner, and more focused on fish and vegetables than terrestrial proteins.

Last year, the building was set to be demolished to make way for condos across from the park. Rod and Minda, who's 74, decided to scale back operations. The long-shuttered Korean-Mexican taqueria Taco Chino presented an opportunity to reopen something a little leaner.

Subo, which means “to feed” in Tagalog, is no longer a turo-turo. The only food that faces the customer is a handful of sweets and stacked plastic containers of *adobong mani*, blistered garlic-fried peanuts that achieve a crunchiness so electrifying they could be weaponized.

You might think the literal lack of transparency of the day's offerings wouldn't be great for business, but Rod is practically an evangelist to a now-larger group of non-Pinoy customers joining old regulars, drawn by the counter-service storefront's higher visibility. (At Three R's you could see the food, but you couldn't see inside from the sidewalk.)

He offers samples to anyone who asks as he runs down the day's rotating menu of about 15 dishes, each available solo or in rice combos. Sometimes he gets lost in the outreach. Once a white guy patiently let him run it all down before ordering. “I was going through my shtick and he shot back at me in full Tagalog,” Rod says. “He grew up in the Philippines. He said, ‘I’m just messing with you.’”

Once a clever nickname to coax kids to eat their blood stew, “chocolate meat” appears in front of the parenthetical “dinuguan” on the menu over the counter at Subo. “It gets people talking,” says Rod.

Other gateway foods are available every day as well. Chubby, crackly egg rolls with chicken, beef, or vegetables are deep-fried to order, as are cigarlike lumpia, their thinner, more scarfable cousins, along with garlic-fried rice-

and-egg *silog* breakfasts supporting various sweet and marinated porky meats or tangy vinegar-marinated fried milkfish.

Certain iconic dishes are also always on hand: vinegar-braised chicken or pork adobo; menudo, in Pinoy form featuring not tripe but pork shoulder, potatoes, chickpeas, and hot dogs; *lechon kawali*, glassy-skinned chunks of fried pork belly to dress with vinegar or Mang Tomás liver sauce; soy-marinated beef bistec; and a trinity of classic noodle dishes including saucy, shrimp-paste-deepened pancit palabok with fresh shrimp and hard-cooked eggs, its softness set off with crunchy chicharrones.

On some days you might find *sinigang*, silky salmon belly or meaty whole pompano bathing in a clear sweet-and-sour tamarind broth, or *pinakbet*, a vegetable medley of squash, okra, green beans, and bitter melon funk up with shrimp paste; *tortang talong*, an Ilocano eggplant omelet, or *tinola*, a restorative chicken soup, its broth given body by the collagen-rich bones.

Dishes not as dramatic but no less gutsy than dinuguan make a strong showing: beefy tomato-potato calderata, enriched with liver paté; peanutty beef-and-tripe kare-kare; the pork liver and tomato stew *igado*; and the gingery beef heart and tripe soup *pinapaitan*, bittered with bile.

Desserts including flan, cassava cake, and *turon*—plantain-and-jackfruit-stuffed egg rolls with crunchy caramel coating—are stacked on the counter, but nothing makes a bigger statement than the made-to-order halo-halo, here a towering Insta-ready soda fountain glass filled with layers of creamy shaved ice, sweet corn, red mung beans, coconut, sweet jackfruit, and jellies, topped with more ice and purple yam or coconut ice cream, toasted rice, and a side of flan.

For years food writers have been anxiously bestowing Next-Big-Thing status on Filipino food. In the last year alone, prominent cheffy projects like Ravenswood's Bayan Ko and Wicker Park's Cebu have taken strides in demystifying the cuisine for non-Pinoy. Now, without changing what they've served for decades, Rod and Minda Menor are raising its profile in their own way, one order of chocolate meat at a time. 

 @MikeSula



Tapas Thursdays

WITH DAVID CHIRIBOGA
11TH OF JULY 2019

Biography & Information

David Chiriboga, a musician of Ecuadorian heritage was born and raised in Chicago. David's style is rooted in Flamenco and Spanish Classical guitar. He has studied in various cities through out Andalusia, the south of Spain, especially in his favorite city of Granada. Some of the artists he has studied flamenco with have been Paco Serrano, Emilio Maya, Antonio Heredia "El Chonico", and Flavio Rodriguez, among others.

He also received his degree in Music Performance at Northeastern University in Illinois, under the instruction of Dr. Brian Torosian.

David has been performing professionally since the year 2000. Some of the groups he has previously performed with include El Payo, The Guitars of Spain and Bandaleros. He currently plays for Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Company, Guitarra Azul and his own Flamenco Ensembles.

Currently, he teaches under his Spanish Guitar Studio program and also leads Chicago Flamenco Events, as the main performer and booking coordinator.

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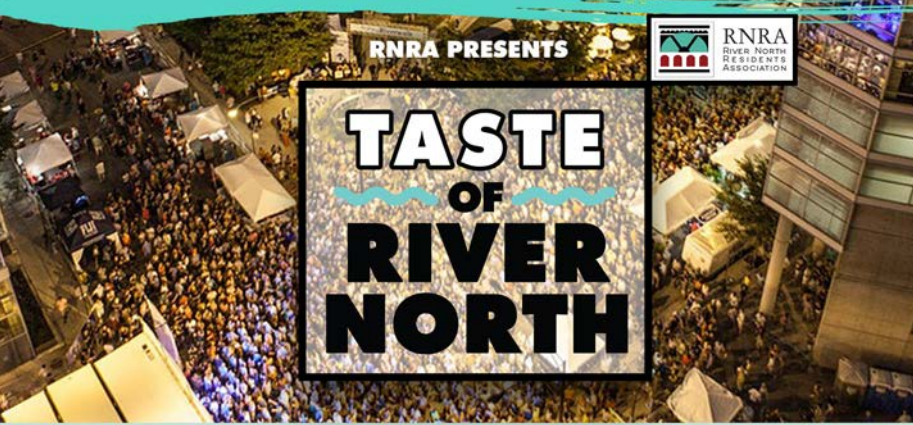


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tasteofrivernorth.com



Burnham McCormick Bird Sanctuary; Rainbow Beach
 📷 COURTESY CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT



All aboard!

From a landmark White Castle to a model town to a collection of giant sculptures—see it all on the Metra Electric District line

By **MAX GRINNELL**

I'm an unapologetic rail fanboy for the Metra Electric District line and the wonderfully diverse communities it serves throughout the south side and its outlying suburban communities.

With the \$10 weekend pass in hand, you can travel through the south side and suburbs and northwest Indiana: to a bird sanctuary, an early burger palace, a town that a railroad car manufacturer built, and a brewery that pays homage to the late Chicago artist Ed Paschke.

Let's first step off the train at the McCormick Place station. No, we're not going to the National Restaurant Association meeting, but rather the expansive McCormick Bird Sanctuary, six acres of prairie grass that cover a massive parking facility. Installed in 2003, the sanctuary is a place for weary avian travelers during their migrations: during a single spring

day here in 2004, birders counted 1,000 sparrows. Take a moment to wander the grounds and note that the pond's water circulation system is powered by solar energy. It's a landscape of soft touches amid an aggressively hard-scaped environment.

I have no idea if any migratory birds ever fly a few blocks away to White Castle #16 on Cermak Road. I don't know if they care that this fast-food pioneer transformed the industry by offering a standardized product and a spick-and-span dining experience. It doesn't matter—it was never for them anyway. Today this tiny faux castle is one of my favorite official landmarked structures. It's actually a bit baffling that it received the designation at all considering the propensity to build big, bright, and shiny new buildings in this rapidly changing area that is referred to by breathless boosters as McCormick Square. But you'll have to walk across the street for a sack of square beef patties; the building is now home to Chef Luciano Kitchen & Chicken.

Hop back on the train and make your way along the South Chicago branch to the South Shore stop. A short walk away is the South Shore Cultural Center, which is better known to Chicago cinephiles as the music venue where the Blues Brothers make their triumphant voices heard loud and clear. I rather like that you can stroll through this former private club's grounds and buildings as if you were living your own life of leisure. There are art classes on offer, plus the Parrot Cage Restaurant (the training kitchen for students at the Washburne Culinary Institute), and a nine-hole golf course for duffers.

A 15-minute walk will find you at the northern edge of Rainbow Beach Park. Today its 142 acres are a space for beach parties and baseball games. There's also a remarkable field house designed by the architect David Woodhouse. The relative calm here belies the fact that for decades white neighborhood residents physically attacked any African Americans who dared set foot on the beach; the space was finally integrated in 1961 after a series of "wade-in" demonstrations. It remains an important place for quietude, but it's also a space to consider Chicago's difficult legacy of racial segregation and urban change.

Take the train back north to 63rd Street, and then grab a southbound train to 111th Street (Pullman). I've always loved Pullman. There's something so terribly organized and orderly yet completely maniacal about it. As I've walked around through its well-thought-out public spaces, I've imagined the frenzy of activity that once found thousands of people coming together to make the celebrated sleeping cars that would zip along outward from Chicago to dozens of other cities around the United States. In our time, things are much more placid here.

The best way to take in the expanse of George Pullman's vision is to walk over to Arcade Park and admire the grandeur of the Hotel Florence (named for his daughter) and then the terraced row houses on the eastern edge of the park. It is a nice introduction to the

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overall aesthetic that dominates the community. You might also walk over to the Market Hall building, where residents could once buy fresh produce and meats.

Then wander by the nearby visitor information center that houses the Historic Pullman Foundation and the Pullman National Monument office. There's a selection of interpretive exhibits and a small selection of local postcards. When I talked with the National Monument's office superintendent, Kathy Schneider, she told me that the National Park Service is hoping to open a visitor center in the nearby Clock Tower by 2020 in conjunction with community partners on the south side.

After stopping to meditate on planned communities, head back to 111th Street, then walk under the Metra tracks and down South Front Avenue to Argus Brewery. Serendipitously, the brewery is housed in the former Joseph Schlitz distribution stables (yes, the beer that made Milwaukee famous), a connective bit of built environment fabric that knits together these two enterprises from the 19th and the 21st centuries.

The folks at Argus even offer an homage to the celebrated north side artist Ed Paschke with their Paschke Pilsner. I think of it as a bit of hoppy cross-town rapprochement that you can wash down while taking one of their Saturday tours.

When you finally reach the end of the line at the University Park station, you might ask "Where am I?"

You're close to Governors Highway and University Parkway, so if you guessed that you are close to an institution of higher education, you'd be right. A ten-minute walk will take you to the first of 29 sculptures set amid 100 acres of prairie. The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park at Governors State University might be one of the least-known public art installations in the south suburbs and perhaps the entire state.

"Mark di Suvero is the reason we're here," Jeff Stevenson, director of the sculpture park tells me. The abstract expressionist sculptor came to what became the Governors State University campus in 1968 and spent two summers here crafting new works. His *Yes! for Lady Day* was the first permanent work added to the park in 1971.

As you walk around the grounds, you'll find works by Mary Miss, Martin Puryear, and Tony Tasset, notably Tasset's *Paul* (2006). The sculpture depicts a rather exhausted looking Paul Bunyan in a space curiously devoid of all trees. It's a fine place to give pause and reflect on the journey, perhaps with a book in hand. 

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Everybody into the pool

Learn Scuba Chicago wants to make underwater exploration accessible to everyone.

Written and photographed by **RACHEL FERNANDEZ**

Water covers about 71 percent of the earth's surface, leaving oceans, lakes, rivers, lagoons, and fjords ripe for exploration.

Entire communities of aquatic creatures and a world of coral reefs, shipwrecks, and underwater caves lie below the tides we see on land, and some of these hidden gems are as close as the bottom of Lake Michigan.

Scuba diving offers a way for people to submerge themselves into these dazzling environments, but getting certified is not a cheap or easy process. Even the most basic scuba certifications can cost upward of \$300; more advanced certifications are double that, not including equipment expenses. Plus, diving in a backyard or community pool gets boring, and taking trips to actually visit undersea animals and coral reefs can cost a pretty penny as well. This leaves many people out of scuba diving communities. The nonprofit organization Learn Scuba Chicago (LSC), located in Bucktown, is dedicated to making scuba training more accessible and building a welcoming community for a wide range of divers.

Avid scuba diver and instructor Bob Huff (known as Captain Bob) founded LSC in 2008 during one of his midlife crises. Huff had retired from practicing law around 2006 to pursue an environmental engineering degree at Northwestern University. Then the recession hit.

"I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do with my life and had worked in the scuba industry back in my college and law school days, so I decided to go get my instructor license," Huff says.

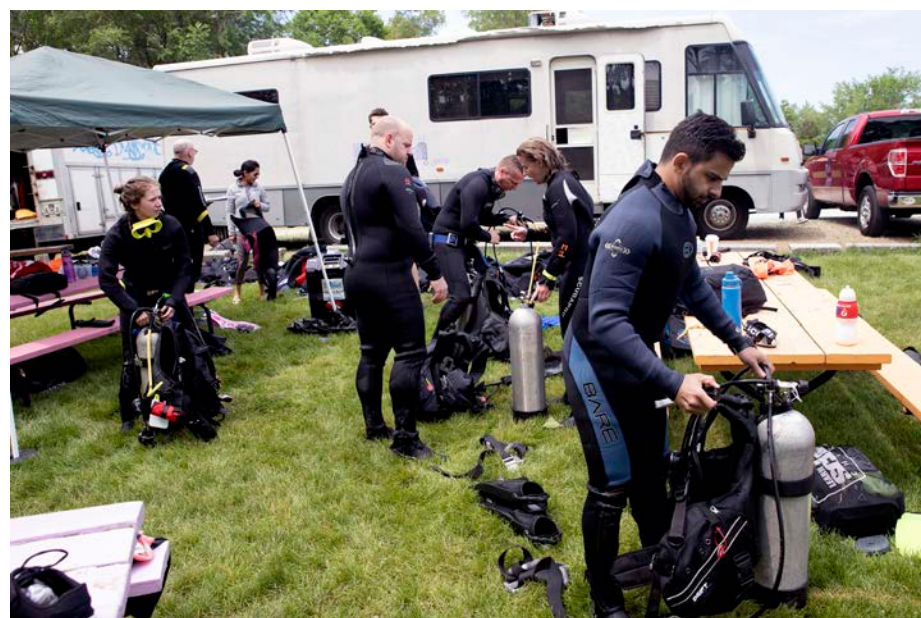
Jobs didn't fall into place so easily, however, and after a couple of flops trying to work at other scuba shops, he finally said "screw this" and took matters into his own hands.

"I had a buddy who was pretty good with web design, and over the course of a drunken weekend we built the Learn Scuba Chicago website," Huff says.

The organization started very small, with Huff working out of his garage and buying gear off eBay to cater to about a dozen students every season. LSC's big boost came, Huff says, when he began promoting it via Groupon in 2011. He acquired upward of 200 students seemingly overnight. ➔



Scuba students need their own masks, fins, and snorkels before they get in the water.



Learn Scuba Chicago students and volunteers gear up to go on an open-water dive at Haigh Quarry in Kankakee in June.

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Magda Barnas helps two students prepare for their open-water dive at Haigh Quarry.



Students and volunteers mingle at a post-dive barbecue.



Students emerge from Haigh Quarry.



Left: "Captain Bob" Huff gives instructions before the open water dive. For many students, this will be their first time diving outside of a pool.

Right: A scuba tank

continued from 12

As the operation grew, Huff opened the LSC shop. It officially became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in July 2014. Since then, LSC has had more than 20 staff members and volunteer instructors teaching hundreds of students ranging in ability and interest, from people who just want to try diving once to those who want to become instructors themselves.

To make the hobby more financially accessible, the organization has a Special Communities Board that grants scholarships covering anything from certification fees to gear and equipment. The category "Special Communities" is left intentionally broad to serve as many people as possible, but funds typically go to youth up to age 18, people with disabilities, active military members, and veterans.

Hallie Brewer is a military veteran who received an LSC scholarship along with her husband, Jed. Hallie found out about LSC's Military Program through an online search and applied for the organization's joint scholarship for veterans and family members.

"I love the idea of being able to connect with other veterans and have this shared activity," Hallie says. "It was one of those things that hit on all of the metrics that we were looking for, because you can go take scuba classes from anybody, but it's actually pretty amazing to find an organization whose mission is the dominant thing."

The Brewers' scholarship covered almost everything the two of them needed to get their 40-foot diving certifications in July 2017. They continued on to get their 60-foot certifications in summer 2018.

Along with providing scholarships and fostering a community of divers, LSC organizes domestic and international dive trips where participants join in conservation efforts. Jed believes that everyone in the world should learn how to scuba dive, because it's one thing to read about reefs and oceans being damaged by pollution, but another to see these environments in person.

"I think it's an extension of the idea that everybody does better when they get exposure to nature, and underwater nature is a big part of the natural world," he says.

The underwater world doesn't mess around. "They have a very simple structure down there," Huff says. "If you piss something off, it will probably eat you." Although facing the depths and unusual creatures may seem overwhelming, there's also something therapeutic, divers say, about relinquishing yourself to the water and the feeling of submerging yourself in a different substance and environment.

"It's kind of like entering an alien world," says Ryan Pace, who received his Open Water Certification through LSC this past June. "You dive, dive down to this place you can't naturally get to, kind of like going to the moon, but instead of the moon being completely desolate, you have this landscape with all these exotic creatures you'd [otherwise] never be able to interact with." 

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Book it to the Publishing House B&B

The West Loop spot is a locally owned oasis in a growing sea of chains.

By KAREN HAWKINS

For me, a staycation has typically involved finding a hotel deal downtown, doing embarrassingly touristy things like paying too much for cocktails and making ridiculously early or scandalously late reservations at the new cool-kid restaurant, and throwing shade at actual tourists.

Then, in a former journalistic life, I got an invite to stay at the Publishing House Bed & Breakfast in the West Loop, owned by a local couple, and a new staycation challenge occurred to me: to stay, eat, and drink local the entire time.

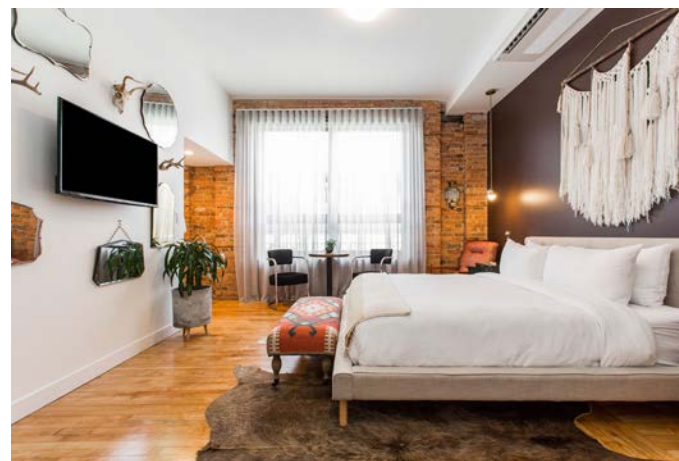
If you don't count Airbnbs or VRBOs, meeting the accommodations part of an all-local challenge is no easy task, especially

close to downtown. There are fewer than 20 independently owned and operated bed-and-breakfasts in Chicago proper, spread from Edgewater to Bronzeville. It's a rare extravagance, and after my stay at Publishing House, I would argue the urban B&B is the best way to staycation. You get the feeling of being hosted at a well-appointed home, easy access to some of the city's most walkable neighborhoods, and a homemade breakfast free of powdered eggs.

From the shockingly blue front door to the eye-popping views of downtown from the common living room to the cozy custom breakfasts, the Publishing House has been crafted to make guests feel as if they're staying with friends. Friends who happen to have a meticulously designed and decorated 11-room mansion steps from Randolph Street's restaurant row and Fulton Market, and with a full restaurant and bar on-site. We all need more friends like these.

It's not uncommon for guests, especially wedding and birthday parties, to rent out the whole place for the weekend, and it feels so much like someone's house that owners Shawn Uldridge and Kimberly Lowery have found folks crashed out on the common-area couch in front of the two-sided fireplace.

Guests have also hosted writers' retreats, and the name of both the B&B and the adjoining restaurant—the Press Room—make it an inspired choice. The building was constructed in 1909 as the Free Methodist Publishing



Clockwise from left: the Press Room; a common room at the Publishing House; the Dybek guest room

© NICK GERBER, JOSHUA HAINES

House, and shortly after that it was occupied by a casket factory and showroom.

The building was the last holography museum in the United States until the bank repossessed it in 2009. Uldridge and Lowery bought the place in 2014 and spent the next three years working with a woman-powered team of architects and designers to build out the bed-and-breakfast, restaurant, and retail space. My stay was part of an assignment for a feminist magazine, so we talked a lot about the impact women have had in transforming the building from oddball museum to boutique-y getaway. To get a sense of how rare their woman-led architecture and design team is, consider this: women make up half the graduates from architecture programs in the U.S., but only 20 percent of the licensed architects

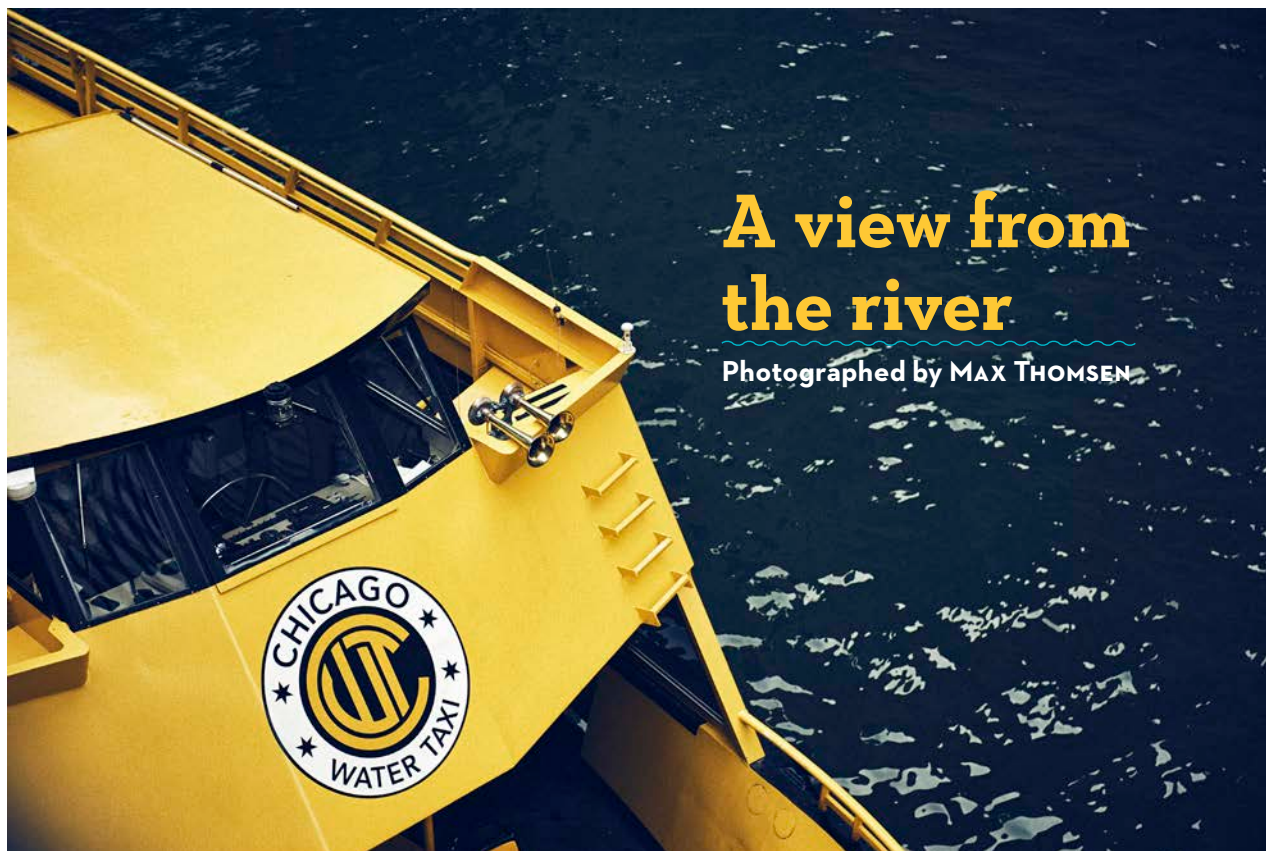
and 17 percent of the partners or principals in U.S. architecture firms.

Every guest room has its own name—Second City, Cisneros, and Audrey, for example—and its own distinct design identity. It all feels intentional without being pretentious; these are your mansion-owning friends who are looking to pamper you without showing off.

Publishing House rates vary according to the day of the week, the time of year, the size of the room, and of course, whether you want to rent out the whole shebang. The upstairs space with killer downtown views is also available for meetings and events, and Sofar Sounds has even held concerts there.

Staycation challenge: accepted.

@ChiefRebelle



A view from the river

Photographed by MAX THOMSEN



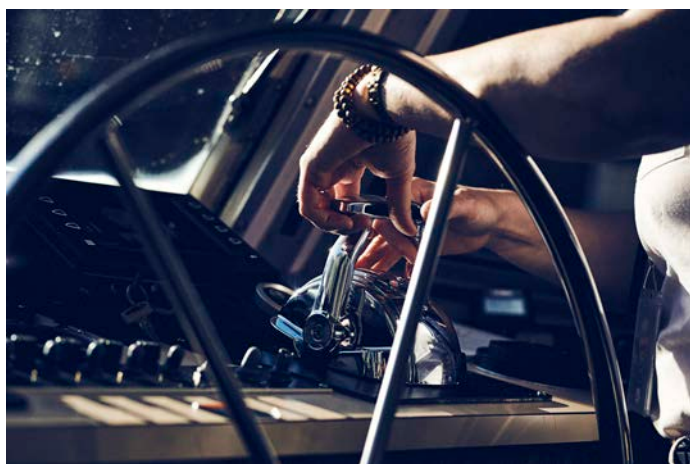
Captain Chloe West

Chicago Water Taxi offers transportation for commuters and tourists along the Chicago River. The ships travel between Goose Island and Chinatown daily from Saint Patrick's Day weekend to December (weather depending). Photographer Max

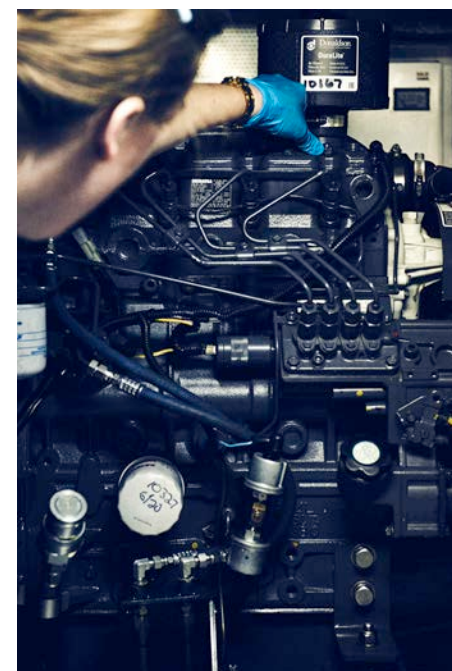
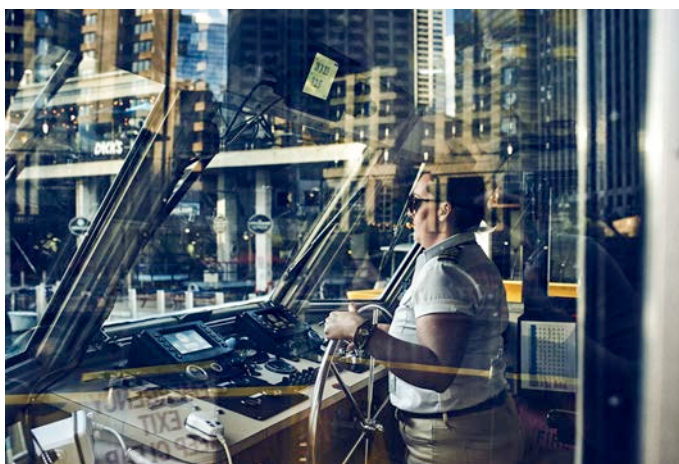
Thomsen spent a few days following Captain Chloe West, a ten-year veteran of the company, and her crew on the *Wendella Ltd.* Shuttling folks along the waterway revealed unique views of the city only visible from bow or stern.

—JAMIE RAMSAY

CHICAGO WATER TAXI
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With a few gentle adjustments of the throttles and a spin of the wheel, Captain West pulls the ship in with grace.



West inspects the ship's two generators.



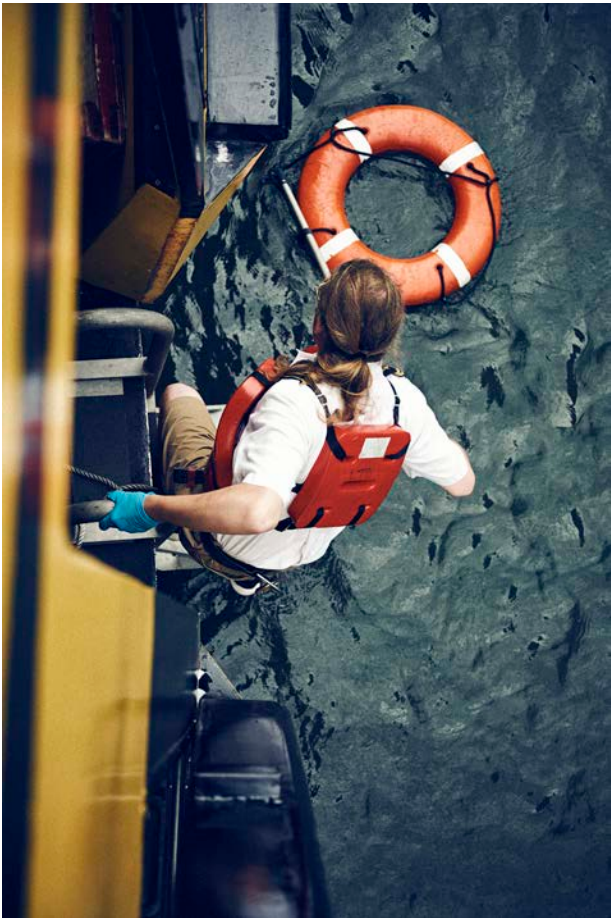
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Two massive John Deere engines power the *Wendella Ltd.* The engines are cooled with pumps that pull water from the river.



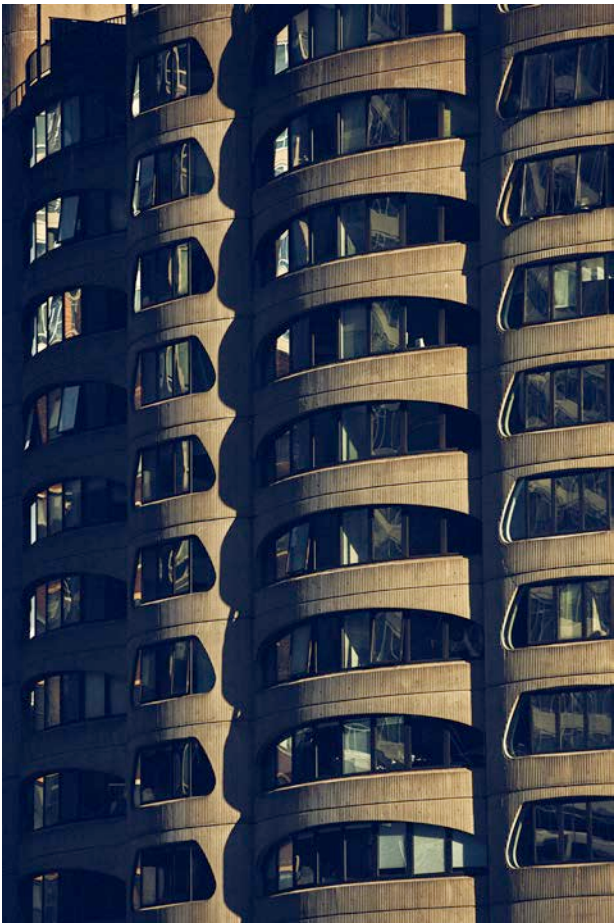
Deckhand David Dietrich unties the ship and readies it for departure.



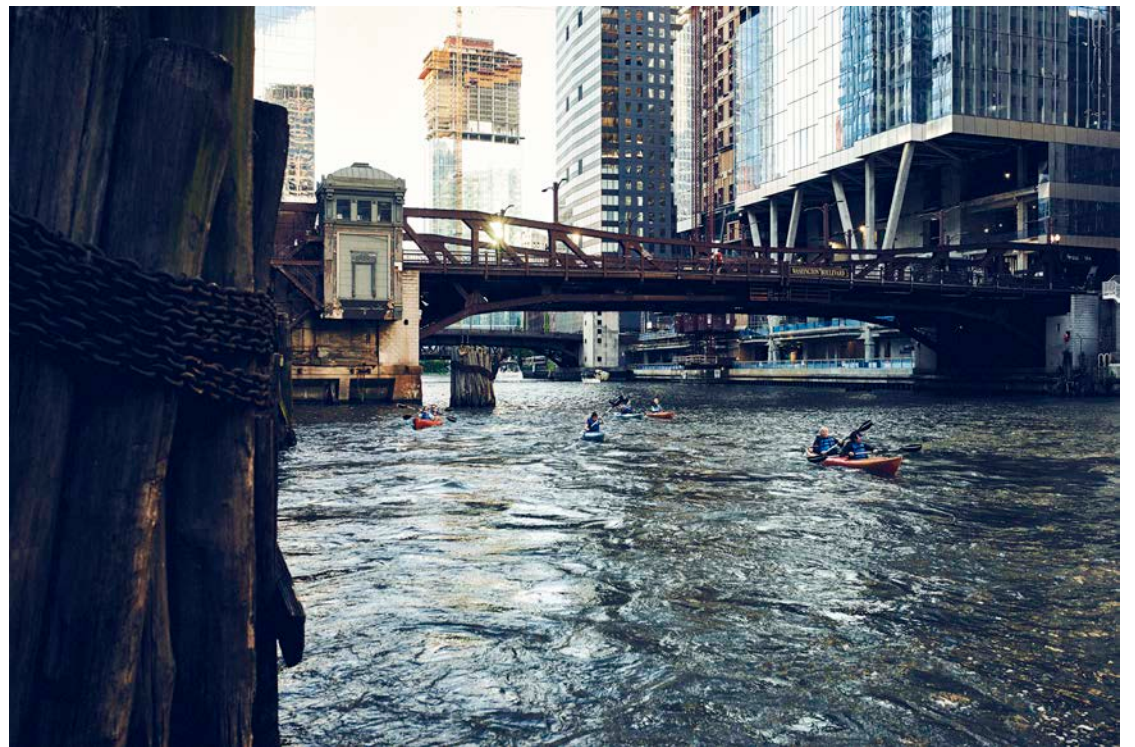
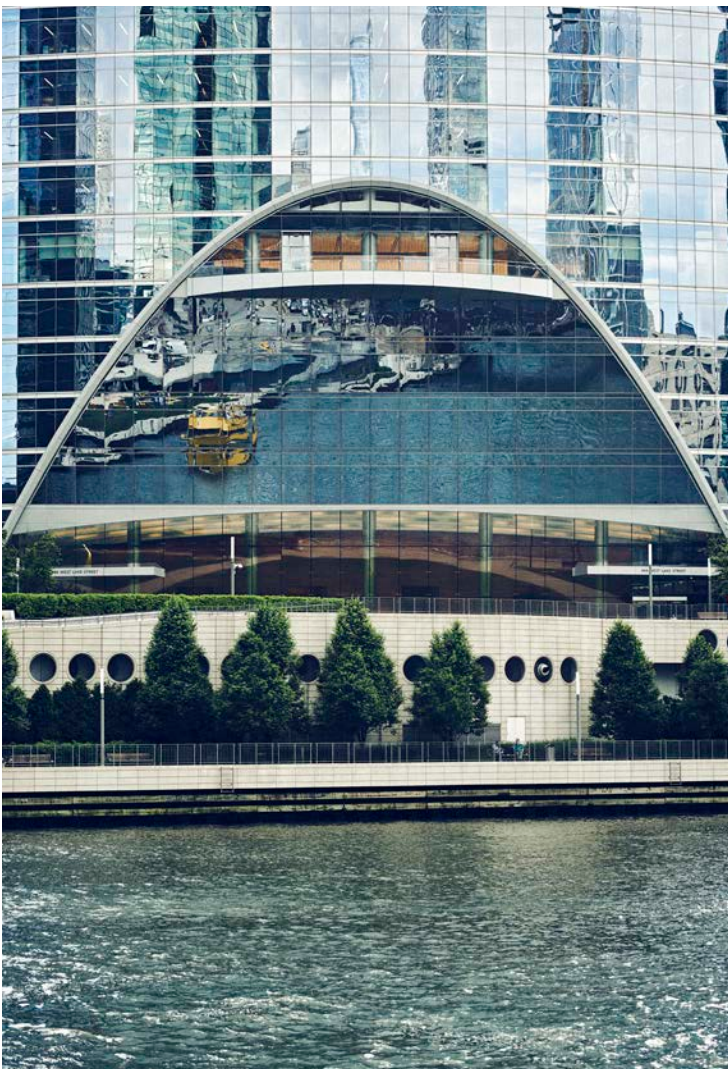
Before the day starts, the crew practices retrieving a ring buoy, part of a Coast Guard safety test.



The ship is docked overnight at the Ogilvie and Union Station stop.



A close-up of Bertrand Goldberg's River City complex (sibling to downtown's Marina City)



Clockwise from top left:

The REI boathouse at the Chinatown stop in Ping Tom Memorial Park rents kayaks to travel the river.

Deckhand Nick Leon installs a nonslip ramp for passengers to enter and exit the ship.

The *Wendella Ltd.* waits for kayakers to pass.

Reflection of the ship in the River Point building at 444 W. Lake 



The decor is eclectic and strange, but doesn't kill the vibe.  COURTESY KING SPA

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A trip to King Spa cleanses the body and mind.

By **MAYA DUKMASOVA**

The Chicago area's premier Korean spa is located in an unassuming strip mall in Niles, next to a Super H Mart and across from a Subway, a dental clinic, and a handful of other typical suburban businesses. The entrance to King Spa & Sauna is flanked by stone lions gazing over a dreary landscape of parking lots and an apartment complex. But through its doors and down a long hallway with mirrors, fake plants, and canvas prints of Audrey Hepburn is an alternate dimension.

The spa is open 24 hours. You can sleep there if you want. Entry for a day is \$40, but Groupon deals will cut that to \$25, and the H Mart often has coupons if you ask at the register. For \$2 to \$5 extra, patrons can access the "Base Room" (more on that later). Inside, the building is divided into men's and women's baths and steam rooms, and a vast coed lounge with specialized dry saunas heated to temperatures ranging from 28 to 280 degrees Fahrenheit. I always recommend that people come early on a weekday morning, when the spa is at its calmest.

It's unfortunate, but King Spa isn't a friendly place for people resisting the gender binary and/or grappling with their own gender identity. The baths require total nudity. It is possible to bypass them, and after changing into one of the spa-provided uniforms (oversize cotton shorts and T-shirts, pink for women, gray for men) to enter the lounge. Some of the sleeping lounges on the second floor still separate into women-only and coed spaces, though. If being unerotically naked around other men or women is something you're comfortable with or feel like exploring, however, the baths offer a splendid opportunity.

Like many people raised in cultures where communal bathing is practiced, I find the experience comforting. When our society is so fixated on body conformity and discipline, to be in a space with other naked women feeling free in their bodies is liberating. The judgmental gaze (from within and without) can relax, its piercing, harsh assessments fading out of focus. I've heard from darker-skinned women that being in the King Spa baths can be disconcerting because of objectifying stares from the

older women staffing the space or from other patrons, so I don't want to discount the possibility of such an experience. But on my last visit, early on a Friday morning, the Jacuzzis and shower stalls of the baths hosted women in their early 20s through at least late 60s, of all body types, and who were Black, white, Asian, and Latinx. One with a single mastectomy and sparse hair lounged by herself, apparently fully relaxed, in one of the bubbling pools. For an extra charge, patrons can book massages and body scrubs from women staff in uniforms of black bras and granny panties, "vaginal steaming" sessions, "ear candling," hair waxing, and more. I saw all types of women receiving these services.

One thing that you will be judged upon is not following the rules, so here they are: No bathing suits or outside towels in the baths—the spa provides small orange towels for drying or modesty as one sees fit. You must shower before entering the pools and steam room. Tie up your hair if it's long. After the steam room, shower again before reentering the pools. One of the central thrills of the spa is the experience of sudden temperature contrast, and it can be tempting to jump straight into the cold pool after heating to your limit in the steam room. Since you have to rinse off before doing so anyway, I recommend just blasting the cold shower and letting the endorphins course through your body.

The decor is eclectic and strange in the coed lounge. Pink-upholstered armchairs set in white-and-gold wood carved with rococo floral motifs line the center of the floor. Here peo-

ple rest, read, sleep. A hodgepodge of decorations fills the walls and ledges—framed drums and dry gourds, a wooden elephant head and taxidermied tortoise, impressionistic oil paintings and faded sepia photographs of women weaving, antique chests and cabinets (some on sale starting as low as \$500), giant crystals (yours for \$18,000), a golden pot-bellied Buddha, wooden theater masks, posters of calligraphy, framed blades of grass. Topped by slowly spinning fans that look like boat propellers, the space gives the impression of a dry aquarium decorated for the swimming pleasure of tropical fish. Though it seems like the aesthetic is the antithesis of the energy the spa is supposed to produce, these decorations somehow don't kill the vibe. All this stuff is just there to rest your eyes on. There's also a screening room showing low-impact movies (*The Karate Kid*, *If I Stay*), massage and accupressure rooms, chessboards on low tables, and three types of sleeping lounges upstairs. Around the perimeter of the lounge the dry saunas are ensconced in walls or stand alone as little huts.

There's the lukewarm Hinoki cypress-wood room, where you can bury yourself in mounds of tiny, smooth wooden cubes. It feels like an adult version of a ball pit (warning: do not throw the cubes at others). In the charcoal room the temperature seems to be in the 80s or 90s, and visitors are admonished not to touch the wavy walls. There's a round hut, lined with Himalayan rock salt, where it's dark and not very hot. The gold-plated pyramid creates the sensation of being on the beach on a perfect summer day. After lying in the heat for a while it's nice to sit in the ice room, with its frozen walls illuminated by black lights, where the temperature hovers just below freezing.

The most intense of the saunas is the sudatorium, a giant dome heated by fire, where temperatures on the floor were at 170 degrees on the day I visited. You enter wrapped in a burlap shawl and sit on a burlap mat. You're not allowed to lie down or stay there more than five minutes. It's dark and so hot you can't feel anything but your breathing. After one minute the sweat came in waterfalls, and, per the informational video, carried with it toxins clogging glands and pores.

When you get hungry, the cafe offers pan-Asian and standard American fare. It's expensive. King Spa is clearly cashing in on a captive, relaxed customer base with \$8 egg rolls. But the meals are generous. For \$14.99 I got a large plate of japchae with beef, miso soup, rice in a little steel container, and four pickled-vegetable side dishes. I'd have never bought a \$7.99 aloe juice if I'd seen the price before checkout,



The judgmental gaze can relax, its piercing, harsh assessments fading out of focus. © COURTESY KING SPA

but it was so perfectly refreshing after hours of spa time that I had no regrets. After lunch I took a digestive nap in the oxygen room, a hushed, dusky space of pine wood with bubbling oxygen dispensers and stablelike spaces on the floor fitted with thick mats, wooden foot rests, and leather pillows.

I saved the “Base Room” for last. It’s advertised as a special attraction, one offered exclusively at spas in Chicago, Dallas, and Japan, and “not even available to South Korea.” Patrons who’ve paid for the experience receive a special green towel before entry. Inside, it’s dim; there are no sounds. The scalding walkway between the stones on which people lie is paved with large pebbles and covered with rugs. A little smoke fountain erupts silently at the center of the space. The wall is inlaid with charcoal pieces and rocks in the shapes of tree trunks. One side of the room is 140F, the other 130F. I picked the cooler side, laid down on my towel, and noted the time on a big round clock.

Invented by a Mr. Ono, the sauna is heated through a technology in the stone floors. After 20 minutes inside, “you’ll feel yourself start to melt,” an explanatory poster promised. Under the reddish-orange light and with the heat as thick as sauce, I felt like a rotisserie chicken. The sweat came after five minutes, first in rivulets crawling down like worms, then in sheets precipitating from large patches of skin. Thoughts glided through my mind like shadows projected by a child’s rotating night-light. When 20 minutes were up, I got up slowly and

walked out and into the ice room, 100 degrees cooler. My body was abuzz, my mind euphoric. Several minutes went by before I began to feel the cold.

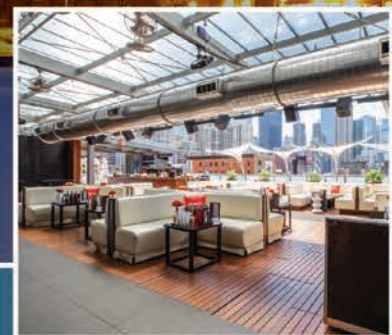
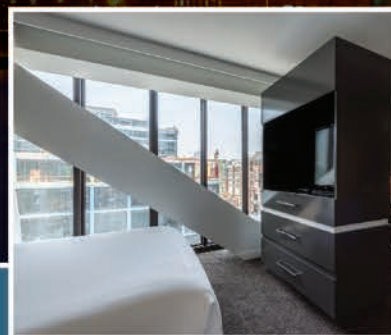
We make little time for and assign little value to fully corporeal experiences in our society, aside maybe from sex. And even that can often be an out-of-body trip. Being at this spa, though, forces one to inhabit the body in a refreshing way: feeling yourself heat and cool, your heart beating faster and slower, pupils adjusting to light and darkness. You experience texture with your skin, eyes, and ears. You can let your body sleep or idle. Even if you don’t believe in the medicinal properties of gold or salt or charcoal, these sauna spaces have a real effect. They connect you to the basic metabolic functioning of your body, its beautiful machinery that’s all too often either unnoticed or an annoyance.

Sure, even here, people are on their phones and computers (there’s free Wi-Fi), but not inside the saunas. There, all you can do is be. King Spa allows you to let go of both distraction and focus. And unlike exercising, unlike even yoga, there’s nothing to achieve. This experience doesn’t have to end until you’re good and ready. No one will wake you from Savasana or turn on the light too soon, or bring you a check reminding you that you’re on someone else’s clock. I can’t imagine \$27 better spent or a better definition of vacation. 

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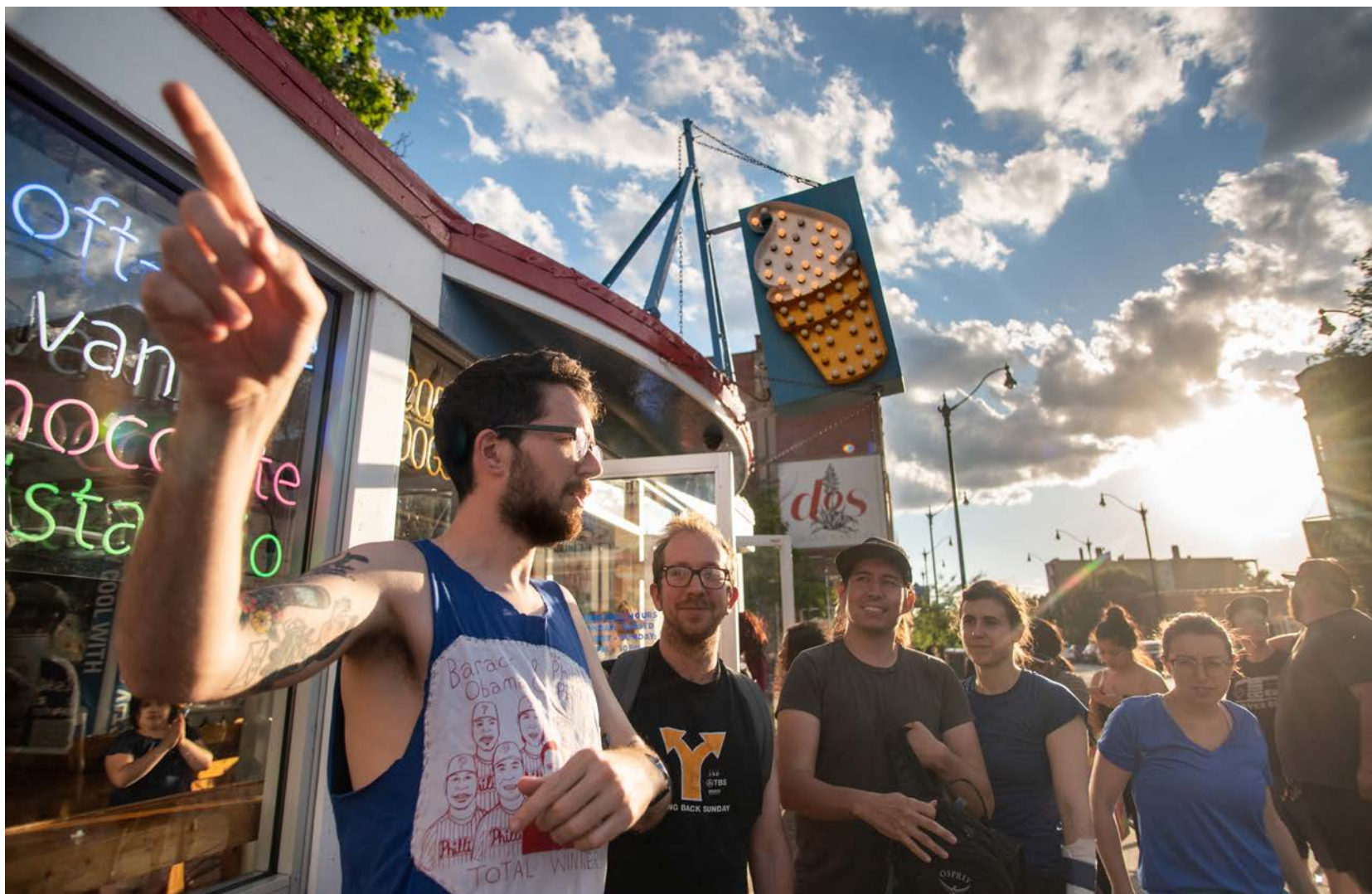


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Who wouldn't run for ice cream?

But the best parts of a “Freeze run” are the friends made and sights seen along the way.

Written by LEOR GALIL

Photographed by MATTHEW GILSON

I prefer to call myself a runner rather than actually engage in the act of running. I’m a latecomer to the sport, and not always an agreeable participant. For most of the past four years, I’ve run five kilometers outdoors every other day, though that’s not accounting for those frigid months when there’s a good chance I could slip on a hard patch of ice. I put my body ➔

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**continued from 22**

through this unpleasant routine partly for the alleged health benefits, and more specifically to counteract my ridiculous sweet tooth. In my 20s, I realized every day can be Halloween if you really want it; in my 30s, I've learned my body doesn't always want it. I still have mixed feelings about running, but at least I'm a little less guilty indulging in an extra scoop of ice cream afterward.

In the spring, my friends Matt Walsh and Geoff Hing decided to "run the runoff." The Sunday before April's mayoral election, they took off on a route that started at Lori Lightfoot's Logan Square residence and ended at Toni Preckwinkle's Hyde Park home. That 12.5-mile trek inspired them to plot more themed ventures that would allow them (and anyone else) to engage with the city differently. In retrospect, it seems so obvious to pair running and ice cream; what better way to encourage exercising in the heat than a cool treat? By mid-April, seven of us began the first in a series of "Freeze runs."

Our basic premise is outlined in a public Google doc—we're an open, noncompetitive dessert-oriented running club—that also includes a list of different establishments we've selected as endpoints. Each run begins at the Freeze, the Logan Square fast-food and soft-serve spot formerly part of the Tastee Freeze chain (participants don't have to eat ice cream at the Freeze before we take off; I definitely don't have the constitution for it). As I've previously written in the *Reader*, my love for the Freeze borders on unhealthy (I sometimes picture a medium pistachio soft-serve cone to motivate me during a grueling run).

The end destination changes every run, which means we get to try all sorts of frozen treats; with every new route we also extend the distance we travel, which means I get increasingly exhausted after every outing. At the end of the summer, we plan to go from

the Freeze to the Original Rainbow Cone in Beverly, a 13.7-mile excursion. (Unless I begin training for a half marathon, like, yesterday, I don't foresee being able to do the full Rainbow Cone run.)

We frequently shared the Google doc on Twitter before each run, inviting anyone to join us; that's how we recruited a couple of our regulars, Sarah Joyce and Zach Long, both of whom are friends (our other regulars, Julia Heney and Yana Kunichoff, helped plan the Freeze runs from day one). We don't time our runs, since it's not a race, and we want to encourage people of all levels of experience to join in—our feat isn't complete till everyone finishes. So far, we've gone on seven treks that have taken us through Humboldt Park, Ukrainian Village, Wicker Park, Lincoln Park, Lakeview, Avondale, Irving Park, Albany Park, and the West Loop. Our longest journey was roughly five miles, which happened by accident; Susie's Drive Thru in Albany Park was closed the night we arrived, so we recalibrated and sped off to Alaska Paleteria y Neveria, about a mile away.

Whenever we finish and order ice cream, I'm usually covered in a thin veneer of sweat, though I can't recall any scoopers asking about our small crew; a few times, fellow Freeze fiends have asked if we're in a running club, usually after noticing one of us stretching.

My attitude toward running hasn't completely changed. It can still feel like a chore, though one that requires more time and attention than taking out the garbage. But the Freeze runs have allowed me to be more considerate with the time I spend exercising. I haven't stopped my routine circles around my neighborhood park's dirt track, but if running affords me some quality time with friends and lets me experience the city in an entirely new way, I'm all for it. And on those humid summer evenings I've spent running up long, barren stretches of concrete, at least I've been able to reward myself with ice cream at the end.

A couple weeks ago, we traveled to Rakki Cafe, a newish Wicker Park establishment that specializes in Asian desserts. We went around part of the Humboldt Park Lagoon, then eventually across a stretch of Augusta I knew decently well. Near Damen, we passed two Muslims praying on the sidewalk; when we turned north on Wolcott, we stopped to pose next to the "Shit Fountain," an infamous site I'd seen online but had previously managed to miss in person. At Rakki Cafe, I ordered the matcha-and-black-sesame soft-serve. I wish all my exercise experiences contained so many unexpected delights. 

The author often imagines a medium pistachio soft-serve cone for motivation when running, and ends covered in a thin veneer of sweat. Pictured: ice cream from Rakki Cafe in Wicker Park



Do a Doubleday

Ride the Red Line for a cross-town series featuring both the city's baseball teams.

By KATE SCHMIDT

A few times each year Chicagoans can make the most of living in a city with two major-league baseball teams by catching both clubs in one day—what long-time *Reader* production director Dave Jones called a “Doubleday,” in honor of baseball’s supposed inventor, Abner Doubleday. This season’s remaining chances fall on Friday and Saturday, August 23 and 24, so if nothing else you’ll avoid having to pay \$10 for a cup of hot chocolate at Wrigley. Both Cubs games are 1:20 PM matinees against the Washington Nationals, who are managed by former Cub (and Cubs bench coach) Dave Martinez and feature a bunch of good young players beyond formidable starters Max Scherzer and Stephen Strasburg. Not *that* into the game or the matchups? Sit in the bleachers for maximum sunburn and access to Hot Doug’s. And note: the Friday matinee is a “gold” home game as compared to the Saturday game’s pink “marquee” status, so it’s cheaper in addition to offering you a day off work.

Hop on the Red Line at Addison and be transported down to the Sox-35th stop for the

second half of your Doubleday. Under former Cubs manager Rick Renteria, who’s become an expert at handling talented developing teams, the still-rebuilding White Sox are playing the Texas Rangers—not perhaps a matchup to set the heart on fire, but Friday (first pitch 7:10 PM) is Elvis Night, with postgame fireworks, and Saturday’s game (start time 6:10) offers the consolation of a White Sox beer stein giveaway. Speaking of beer, over and above the standard refreshments, Sox Park has craft brews sold by the bottle and street foods like elotes and churros in addition to a wide range of encased meats and (on level one only) a couple of Antique Taco stands. As for where to sit, loyal fans have their own preferences—I’ve

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heard good things about section 110, which puts you right by the aforesaid tacos, but we always enjoy the very affordable upper-deck seats behind home plate, sections 533 or 531, the lower the better. As a kicker, the top of the exit ramp affords you one of the city’s most stunning panoramic views of the Chicago skyline—you just might gape like a tourist. **A**

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FEATURE

Behind the scenes at the museum

Or, Chicago's theater history and culture in 56 objects

By KAYLEN RALPH

A new exhibit at the Design Museum of Chicago pushes visitors through the theater's proverbial fourth wall and onto the scaffolded backstages of some of the city's most storied theaters.

"Setting the Stage: Objects of Chicago Theatre," which opened to the public on June 29 in collaboration with the city-sanctioned Year of Chicago Theatre initiative, is an exploration of Chicago theater culture and history via objects contributed from more than 40 of Chicago's theaters. Just days before the exhibit opened to the public, Lauren Boegen, the museum's executive director of operations and collections, was still driving around the city collecting artifacts ranging from the *O* in the *Nederlander Theatre's* former *Oriental Theatre* marquee to a life-size *Frankenstein* costume from *Lifeline Theatre*. And the exhibit is still growing: a prop plane with an 11-foot wingspan on loan from *Lookingglass Theatre Company* will be installed mid-July.

"The show is about design—it's at a design museum," says Tanner Woodford, the museum's founder and executive director. "Everything in theater is designed—from the moment you walk up to the theater, you have the lights flickering, and it pulls you into that experience, to the fashion, objects, props, absolutely every single element. We're trying to put together a very cross-disciplinary design show."

The exhibit is a set within a set. Hunter-green vinyl lettering notes each object's theater of origin and provides some context about the contributions. The objects themselves are mounted and displayed in distinct, animated ways from floor to ceiling across a minimalist, functional, wooden grid of scaffolding.

"The idea when you walk into the space is that it feels like you're walking backstage,"

says Woodford. "We've left exposed studwork, really built out the grid in a way that you can add things to it very quickly, and then as objects from theaters come in we're displaying them on that grid."

The visual objective is to inject some of the item's personality and significance into its display, and in the process, create a more optically alluring exhibit as well.

Take the *Second City's* contribution, for example. One of the comedy theater's iconic black wooden chairs is hung midway up the exhibit's scaffolding, tipped forward as though an invisible laughing occupant might fall onto the floor at any second.

"We didn't want to just put it on the ground," says Woodford. "We wanted to elevate it. We thought it was important to tilt it so you could see some of the glow-in-the-dark stickers that are on it, just to give it that magic that comes with *Second City*."

There are approximately 250 theaters in

Chicago, and the curatorial staff at the Design Museum—with the help of their partners at the *League of Chicago Theatres* and the city's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, which pledged \$1 million to the Year of Chicago Theatre's programming—reached out to every single one of them for contributions to "Setting the Stage."

"Visually, we're trying to express drama," says Woodford. "Curatorially and conceptually, we're trying to be inclusive. We're taking all of these theaters that are different sizes and we're putting them on the same level. We're not doing a big section for big theaters and a small section for small theaters."

Pieces from such legendary institutions as *Second City* are integrated with contributions from lesser-known theaters such as *Erasing the Distance*, a north-side documentary theater that explores issues of mental health through its productions based on stories from real life.

"SETTING THE STAGE: OBJECTS OF CHICAGO THEATRE"

Through 1/5/2020: Mon-Sat 10 AM-6 PM, Sun 11 AM-4 PM, Design Museum of Chicago, 72 E. Randolph, 312-894-6263, designchicago.org, \$5 suggested donation.



A puppet from *Lifeline Theatre* production of *Frankenstein*, designed by Cynthia Von Orthal; Joshua Allard's costume designs for *Best for Winter* at *Idle Muse Theatre Company*

DESIGN MUSEUM OF CHICAGO



In April, *Erasing the Distance* produced *That Night*, a critique of the criminal justice system based on the true story of Dana Holland, a man who spent more than ten years in jail for a crime he did not commit and for which he was wrongfully convicted. "Setting the Stage" features some of the original context panels from the lobby display during *That Night's* run back in April.

In keeping with the exhibit's interactive emphasis, the Design Museum's team further enhanced this contribution by using blue tape to mark a box on the museum's floor—a box that is the exact size and shape of the jail cell Holland shared with another person for ten years. Visitors to the exhibit are welcome to step inside it and contemplate the production's larger significance.

The exhibit's interactive elements are what the curators hope will keep its content fresh over its six-month duration—a period that's double the length of the museum's typical exhibits. Each month, a different Chicago theater will produce a small pop-up presentation in the exhibit's center "stage."

For the rest of July, designer Joshua Allard will be exhibiting the entirety of his 175-piece costume collection created in just three weeks for *Idle Muse Theatre Company's* recent production of *Best for Winter*. Allard's sketches are hung from strings among the garments themselves, exactly the way the designer presents them when pitching concepts for any production. Allard will periodically be visiting the Design Museum's stage to teach visitors how to weave, a skill he picked up when creating the costumes for *Best for Winter*.

Other monthly theater partners will include *Goodman Theatre*, *Black Ensemble Theater*, *ETA Creative Arts*, *Joffrey Ballet*, and *Chicago Children's Theatre*, which will cap off the series of pop-ups in December with the set from *X-Marks the Spot*, an extrasensory theater production that caters to children who have low vision or are blind.

"After we'll have been through six months of programming, after we've seen everything around the gallery, it's a way of reframing what theater can do," Woodford said. "It can provide opportunities for people who need them while lifting them up." □

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The Music Man  LIZ LAUREN

THEATER

Ya got (women) trouble

Mary Zimmerman makes *The Music Man* feel fresh . . . even if the gender stereotypes are stale.

By CATEY SULLIVAN

You can say this for director Mary Zimmerman's staging of Meredith Willson's multiple Tony winner, *The Music Man*: like the titular con man in the 1957 musical, she sure knows the territory. From the corrupting influence of the bawdy humor magazine *Captain Billy's Whiz Bang* to the Isadora Duncan-inspired modern-dance ode to a Grecian urn, Zimmerman packs the story (by Willson and Franklin Lacey) with as much charm as you'd expect from the tale of a flimflammer colliding with truculent Iowans in 1912.

But as good as this revival is, there are two potential deal breakers. First, it's impossible to see "Professor" Harold Hill as the beloved character that made *The Music Man* the trendiest ticket on Broadway more than 60 years ago. He is, after all, a man who compares virgins and their wives to web-spinning spiders ("The Sadder-But-Wiser Girl") and who harasses the town librarian, Marian Paroo, despite her unambiguous, repeated requests that he leave her alone ("Marian the Librarian"). Second, there's River City's female townsfolk. They are primarily bellowing harriidans who love nothing more than ridiculous plumage

and petty gossip, particularly if it involves trashing Marian and the scandalous books she peddles. (Balzac is a particular target.) Marian is the exception. She's not petty, but both her big solos ("Goodnight, My Someone" and the unfortunately titled "My White Knight") are all about yearning for a man.

So we have a conundrum. Zimmerman's production is lively, entertaining, and makes Willson's warhorse bloom with the freshness of Iowa corn in high summer. It is also a show that couldn't pass the Bechdel test if Alison Bechdel herself were playing all the parts. Last but hardly least, the supposed hero here is—at best—a jerk. It's a rather dazzling testament to Zimmerman's own powers of charm that *The Music Man* is so entertaining even though it's so problematic. She truly sells it.

It's tough to be mad at a production that opens with Bri Sudia center stage as a traveling salesperson slouching authoritatively across a train car while chomping on a cigar the size of a small plantain. Having a woman in a traditionally all-male scene in no way fixes the show's treatment of women, but it is funny as all get-out. Ditto Zimmerman's decision to put some of the town's so-called ruffians

(they're actually all incredibly clean-cut) in petticoats rather than pants.

"Rock Island" is a mini masterpiece of scene setting via spoken word, and Zimmerman's cast positively nails the darn thing with a percussive, physical comedy that's a joy to behold. Ten minutes in and *The Music Man* has already delivered a bona fide showstopper.

Still, this is a show that rises or falls flat on its Harold. Geoff Packard brings something akin to innocence to a character whose survival depends on his cynicism. That adds a poignant element and gives Hill a vulnerability throughout, even at his most manipulative. When he eventually chooses between integrity and chicanery, the moment is unexpected, yet not entirely surprising.

Furthermore, Packard can sing—something that isn't necessarily a given in the role. (Robert Preston famously talked through the lyrics in the 1962 film version.) His "(Ya Got) Trouble" is magnificent, and "Seventy-Six Trombones" will make you want to march even if you are one of those people who eschews parades of any sort.

Monica West brings spine and dignity to Marian, even though her journey from not-in-love to in-love is laughably abrupt and never convincing (that's a book problem, not an actor problem). The part is a showpiece for the most ethereal heights sopranos can ascend, and West scales the stratosphere with strength and beauty.

Choreographer Denis Jones honors the show's signature moments (the invisible band is resplendent in "Seventy-Six Trombones") while creating some of his own (look for *American Gothic* to surface in "Iowa Stubborn.") Daniel Ostling's set captures rural Iowa's endless corn and parochial isolation (a tiny Wells Fargo wagon is whimsy done right). Best of all, music director-pianist Jermaine Hill and his 11-piece orchestra sound marvelous, from the lush, opening strains of the overture to the triumphal closing reprise of "Till There Was You."

Is *The Music Man* lacking in any fully formed femme characters? Yes. Is it nonetheless as entertaining as a John Philip Sousa march on the Fourth of July? Yes. You'll have to decide for yourself whether the latter cancels out the former enough to merit your time and money. 

OPENING

Standard musical issues

Darling Grenadine pours out a familiar showbiz story with a sweet score.

Daniel Zaitchik's new musical (he wrote the songs and the book) is a sweet little show that works very, very hard to keep things real—believable characters, believable dialogue, a story that feels like a slice of life. But Zaitchik's premise is as old as musical comedy: a quirky young composer with writer's block falls in love with a struggling young actor in a Broadway musical just waiting for her big break. Every few minutes another cliché pops up—he drinks too much, she wants to save him, the lead actress in the Broadway musical is a real witch—but the beauty of Zaitchik's work is how gracefully he (most of the time) avoids falling into easy tropes. Still, the story does drag, especially in the second act, and the show ends with a whimper, not a bang.

It's Zaitchik's score that really sells the thing. Zaitchik's tunes are reminiscent of old standards, but not slavishly so, and his lyrics are bright and clever. Like the best classics in the Great American Songbook, they reward careful listening. Indeed, Zaitchik wrote many of the songs first, and then crafted his story to showcase them. The show's leads, Heath Saunders and Katherine Thomas, do the material proud, savoring every clever line without overdoing it. They handle the frequently witty dialogue with similar finesse, exhibiting considerable chemistry.

Darling Grenadine is more quirky and personal than Marriott's more traditional Broadway fare, but it is refreshing to see the theater do the kind of intimate show one is more likely to see in a storefront theater or crammed into a cabaret. —JACK HELBIG
DARLING GRENADINE Through 8/18: Wed 1 and 7:30 PM, Thu 7:30 PM, Fri 8 PM, Sat 4 and 8 PM, Sun 1 and 5 PM; also Thu 8/8 and 8/15, 1 PM; no performance Wed 8/7 and 8/14, 7:30 PM and Sun 8/18, 5 PM, Marriott Theatre, 10 Marriott Dr., Lincolnshire, 847-634-0200, marriotttheatre.com, \$50-\$60.

 They've got the beat.
Get up and Go-Go to Kokandy's Head Over Heels.

When the Go-Go's debuted the irresistibly catchy titular song in 1984, MTV was firmly in the era of the Video Vixen, that barely clad staple of the pop world usually seen gyrating in the background while the Top 40's overwhelmingly male rockers beat their guitars like phallic symbols. The all-female Go-Go's made their own space in this world, using anthemic, upbeat earworms to subvert the male gaze. Their music provides the bouncy through line to *Head Over Heels*, conceived by Jeff Whitty and adapted by James Magruder from Sir Philip Sidney's 16th-century romance *The Arcadia*. The plot draws from Shakespeare (about 60 percent *The Taming of the Shrew*, 20 percent each *The Winter's Tale* and *As You Like It*) and Greek myth (an oracle propels the plot). The result? A binary-busting love story that celebrates and spans the gender spectrum. In other words: almost 40 years later, the Go-Go's remain on the progressive, sex-positive, righteous side of history. In Kokandy's production, directors Derek

THEATER



Head Over Heels
 © MICHAEL BROSILOW

Van Barham and Elizabeth Swanson craft a joyful ode to all-gender romance and sex. Music director Kyra Leigh turns the production into a party, making the most of a live five-piece band. Listen for leading players Bridget Adams-King, Caitlyn Cerza, and Deanalís Resto (playing princess sisters and a lady-in-waiting, respectively) and their sleeper powerhouse “Good Girl.” The more expected showstoppers—“We’ve Got the Beat,” “Cool Jerk,” and “Mad About You” among them—are every bit as enticing. And Breon Arzell’s irreverent, joyful choreography puts an exclamation point on the whole shebang. —**CATEY SULLIVAN** **HEAD OVER HEELS** Through 8/25: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3 PM; also Sat 7/27, 8/10, and 8/24, 3 PM, and Wed 7/31, 8/14, and 8/21, 8 PM, Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont, 773-975-8150, kokandyproductions.com, \$40, \$35 students and seniors.

RR Mortal Monarchs
 Redtwist’s *King Lear* creates a tempest-torn world in an intimate setting.

William Shakespeare’s 1606 tragedy is often regarded as the Mount Everest of English drama, a towering peak of theatrical poetry whose awesome reputation both intimidates and inspires. But the great strength of Steve Scott’s intimate, bare-bones, modern-dress staging of the play is its emotional humility. With a cast of 19 excellent non-Equity actors—all solidly in command of the Bard’s vigorous, rhythmically dynamic blank verse—this production reminds us that *King Lear* isn’t just about a monarch; it’s about a man.



Darling Grenadine
 © COURTESY OF
 MARRIOTT THEATRE

Two men, actually: King Lear (Brian Parry) and his friend, the Earl of Gloucester (Darren Jones). Both are old, and both rely on loyal adult children to see them through their final years. But Lear and Gloucester each misjudge their offspring. Lear vainly succumbs to the false flattery of his scheming elder daughters—Regan (KC Karen Hill) and Goneril (Jacqueline Grandt), who secretly despise their father—and disinherits their honest, dutiful sister, Cordelia (Kayla Raelle Holder), for failing to sweet-talk him. And Gloucester prizes his wicked bastard son Edmund (Mark West) while banishing his legitimate heir, Edgar (Robert Hunter Bry), who survives by disguising himself as a mad beggar.

The physical and mental infirmities of age and the inevitability of death hang over this bleak, brutal, yet sometimes surprisingly funny play. Lear—cut off from his family and protected only by his faithful servants Kent (Cameron Feagin) and the Fool (Liz Cloud)—and Gloucester both suffer horribly for their poor judgment, forced to wander mad and blind, respectively, through a tempest-torn world where all established values are turned absurdly inside out and upside down. As they are transformed by their ordeals—and as the story’s villains rise to the heights of power before finally being crushed under their own ambitions—*King Lear* binds the audience in a collective awareness of the mortality that we share with these characters, and with each other. This is storefront Shakespeare at its best. —**ALBERT WILLIAMS** **KING LEAR** Through 8/4: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM, Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr, 773-728-7529, redtwist.org, \$35-\$40, \$30-\$35 students and seniors. **R**

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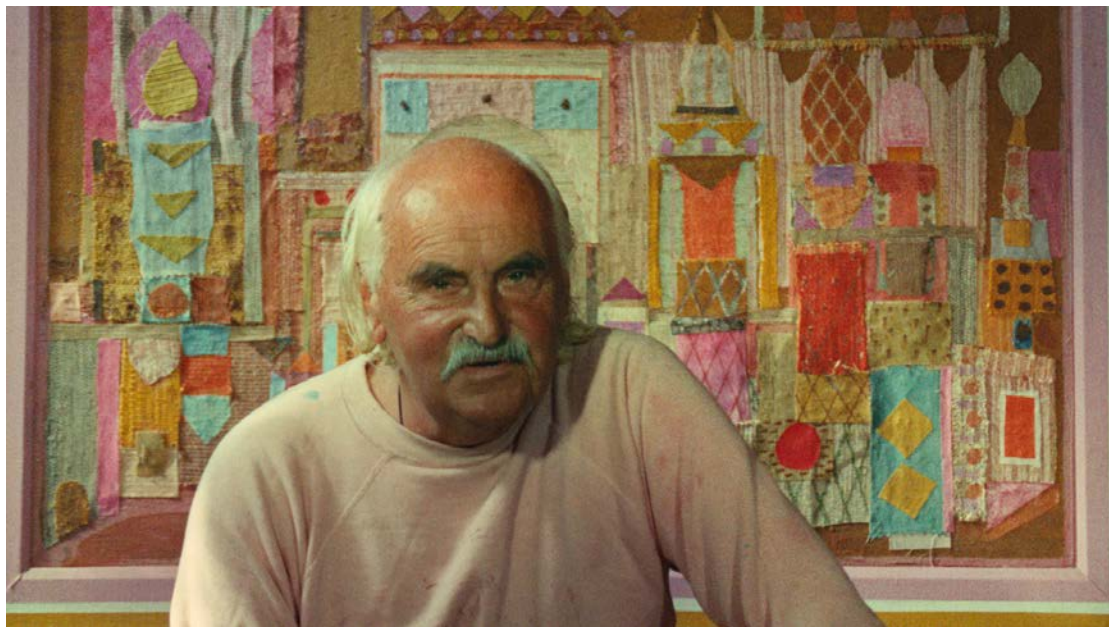
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Uncle Yanco

FESTIVAL

Au revoir, Agnès Varda

A festival of short films honors the ‘godmother of the French New Wave,’ who died in March.

By **CODY CORRALL**

“The worst day of my life happened this year,” says independent film programmer Kathleen Sachs.

Sachs was not alone in that sentiment. Cinephiles around the world felt heavy-hearted following the March 29 death of Agnès Varda, the Belgian-born French filmmaker touted as the “godmother of the French New Wave.”

Which is why Sachs—a contributing writer for the *Reader* and self-identified Varda superfan—teamed up with fellow programmers at Block Cinema at Northwestern University and Filmfront as well as the Consulate General of France in Chicago to celebrate Varda’s extensive career with a free shorts program featuring 35-mm, 16-mm, and digital screenings.

“We curated it from a large body of work and made it about a certain perspective that Varda brought not just to cinema but to life as well,” Sachs says.

The program, titled “La Politique des Autres,” aims to give Chicagoans a taste of the wide breadth of artistic work Varda created

throughout her life rather than focus on one specific theme.

“I think that’s definitely part of the challenge of programming, and the delight of programming Varda’s films is that she worked across six decades and her body of work is so diverse and represents an amazing array of styles, from documentary to narrative, experimental, and political reportage,” says Michael Metzger, curator of media arts at the Block Museum.

The first night of programming, hosted at Block Cinema, features personal and political films released between 1958 and 1982, including *Réponse des Femmes*, *Du Côté de la Côte*, *L’Opéra-Mouffe*, *Ulysse*, and *Uncle Yanco*.

“*Réponse des Femmes* is really all about [women] reclaiming their own vision of themselves and defining what it is to be a woman in society outside of the sort of constructs that is provided through media or through patriarchal culture,” Metzger says.

The second night, hosted at Filmfront in Pilsen, focuses on Varda’s short work from the late 1960s and 1970s: *Elsa la Rose*, *Plaisir D’amour en Iran*, *Salut les Cubains*, and *Black Panthers*.

“You think of Agnès Varda as this woman going places that not a lot of filmmakers, much less female filmmakers, were going at that time,” Sachs says. “*Black Panthers* [1968], which is probably one of her most well-known shorts, shows her not only engaging with radical groups, radical politics, but kind of being at the forefront of that.”

If there’s a central theme to tie these shorts together, it would be the intimate ways Varda portrayed her subjects regardless of genre or style. She often depicted them how they wanted to be seen, Sachs says, rather than imposing a directorial intent like other auteurs associated with the French New Wave.

“She approaches things so thoughtfully and through so many dimensions of how she’s crafting images, crafting space in relation to herself and her subjects,” Malia Haines-Stewart, programmer at Filmfront, says. “She was constantly embodying this ferocious curiosity cinematically, but also in a humanistic way.” 

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NOW PLAYING

RR The Awful Truth

Leo McCarey’s largely improvised 1937 film is one of the funniest of the screwball comedies, and also one of the most serious at heart. Cary Grant and Irene Dunne are a pair of world-weary socialites who decide to drop the pretense of their wide-open marriage, but fate and Ralph Bellamy draw them together again. The awful truth is that they need each other, and McCarey, with his profound faith in monogamy, leads them gradually and hilariously to that crucial discovery. The issues deepen in a subtle, natural way: the film begins as a trifle and ends as something beautiful and affirmative. A classic. —**DAVE KEHR** 91 min. *Fri 7/12, 4 PM; Sat 7/13, 3 PM; and Thu 7/18, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

N Cooked: Survival by Zip Code

Judith Helfand directed this Kartemquin-produced documentary about America’s preparedness for natural disasters, which argues that when widespread tragedies occur, low-income communities are likely to suffer far worse than others. Helfand begins the film by considering the Chicago heat wave of 1995, when hundreds of people (the majority of them poor) died due to inadequate home design and the city’s failure to provide aid to those in need. She then looks at disaster preparation programs in the present, noting that virtually none of them have plans to help blighted communities where the intertwined problems of dilapidated architecture, food deserts, and lack of access to government services constitute a disaster already. The film bites off more than it can chew—Helfand has a lot on her mind, and it often feels as though she’s cramming in too many concerns—but its argument is persuasive and worrying. —**BEN SACHS** 82 min. *Helfand and members of the production team attend multiple screenings; visit siskelfilmcenter.org for details. Fri 7/12, 2 and 8:15 PM; Sat 7/13, 5 PM; Sun 7/14, 2 PM; Mon 7/15, 6 PM; Tue 7/16, 7:45 PM; Wed 7/17, 6 PM; Thu 7/18, 8 PM; Fri 7/19, 8:15 PM; Sat 7/20, 7:30 PM; Sun 7/21, 5:15 PM; Tue 7/23, 8 PM; Wed 7/24, 6 PM; and Thu 7/25, 8 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

Event Horizon

The pits. Borrowing liberally and unintelligently from both *Alien* and *Solaris*, this 1997 space opera, set in 2047, follows a rescue mission near Neptune as it checks out the title spaceship, which has been missing for seven years. (It’s creepy to imagine that the same Hollywood stereotypes and plastic rock music will be with us 50 years from now.) It seems the mad scientist who designed the faster-than-light spacecraft created a black hole in the universe, unleashing some sort of onboard hell where everybody goes bananas; but the storytelling is so clumsy we can’t be sure of that. If you haven’t lived until you’ve seen Laurence Fishburne and Sam Neill duke it out in a vat full of red paint, here’s your chance; personally, my idea of hell would be having to see this stinker again. Written by Philip Eisner and directed by Paul Anderson; with Kathleen Quinlan, Joely Richardson, Richard T. Jones, Jack Noseworthy, and Jason Isaacs. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** R, 95 min. *Tue 7/16-Thu 7/18, 11 PM. Logan*

RR Mad Max: Fury Road

Thirty years after *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome* (1985), writer-director George Miller rebooted his dystopian sci-fi series, replacing Mel Gibson with Tom Hardy as the title hero and completely reimagining the futuristic Australia of the original films. A ruthless tyrant (Hugh Keays-Byrne) uses his control of the last



remaining freshwater source to rule pharaohlike over a mountain community, commanding his own personal army and enslaving several women so they will bear his children. After his lieutenant (Charlize Theron) liberates the women, Max falls in with the group and they trek across the desert in search of a fabled all-female utopia known as the Green Place. This is astonishingly dense for a big-budget spectacle, not only in its imagery and ideas but in the complex interplay between them: the more invested you feel in Miller's fantasy world, the more you want to see it saved from despots and violence. —**BEN SACHS** *R*, 121 min. 35 mm. *Fri 7/12-Sat 7/13, midnight. Music Box*

RR N Maiden

Rugged adventure on the high seas and an inspiring portrait of a ship's crew that had much to prove invigorate this heartwarming documentary by Alex Holmes. At age 16, rebellious Brit Tracy Edwards fled her abusive stepfather and became self-supporting, eventually landing a stewardess job on a charter yacht. That led to a gig as a cook on a yacht competing in the Whitbread Round the World Race, during which she became hooked on the then male-dominated sport of sailing and determined to helm her own all-female crew in the 1989 Whitbread—a historic first. At 33,000 nautical miles the race was the world's longest, and the prospects of *Maiden*, her refurbished ship, were widely held to be dim. But as archival footage (much of it shot by two of her shipmates) shows, the women more than held their own. They gained time by sailing through the frigid southern seas, repaired damage when a leak sprung below decks, and aided a competing crew after two of its men went overboard. That most of the women have remained friends ever since is a testament to their skills, bravery, and magnanimity, and to a vision of female empowerment that endures. —**ANDREA GRONVALL** *PG*, 97 min. *Fri 7/12-Sun 7/14, 11:10 AM, 2:10, 4:40, 7:40, and 10:15 PM; Mon 7/15-Thu 7/18, 2:10, 4:40, 7:40, and 10:15 PM. Century Centre Cinema*

RR N Marianne & Leonard: Words of Love

Nick Broomfield is a daring, edgy British filmmaker with a reputation for bluntness, but in this, his latest documentary, he reveals a warmer personal side because he intimately knew one of his subjects, Norwegian single

mom Marianne Ihlen, who became Canadian poet and author Leonard Cohen's lover and muse in 1960. By 1968, amid the spreading counterculture mores of free love and the practice of then yet-to-be-labeled open marriage, their affair was waning; when a 20-year-old Broomfield visited the Greek island of Hydra, he fell under its spell and that of Marianne, who was part of a circle of expat artists and writers. It's almost a given that the director would be sympathetic toward Marianne; what's surprising is how nonjudgmental he is of Leonard, who became increasingly neglectful, mercurial, and drug dependent as his new career as a composer and singer took off. This is an insider's fascinating meditation on the nature of genius and stardom and the toll they take on the naively optimistic. —**ANDREA GRONVALL** *R*, 102 min. *Fri 7/12-Sun 7/14, 11:15 AM, 2:20, 5, 7:30, and 9:55 PM; Mon 7/15-Thu 7/18, 2:10, 4:40, 7:40, and 10:15 PM. Century Centre Cinema*

RR Moonlight

A film written and directed by a Black man (Barry Jenkins), adapted from a play by a Black man (Tarell Alvin McCraney of Steppenwolf Theatre), and focused on three stages in the life of a gay Black man (Alex Hibbert in childhood, Ashton Sanders in adolescence, and Trevante Rhodes in adulthood) qualifies as exceptional for those reasons alone. Factor in Jenkins's visual poetry—the color blue is almost a character—and the experience becomes transcendent. A haunting piece of high art, this drama moves beyond narrative, loosely connecting key events and leaving broad swaths of the protagonist's journey to the imagination. Cinematographer James Laxton (*Youth*) renders Miami a wonderland of magic and danger, and the nuanced performances of the leads—plus André Holland (Cinemax's *The Knick*) as the hero's complicated love interest and Naomie Harris as his drug-addicted mother—provide the honest emotion needed to ground the operatic material. With Mahershala Ali and Janelle Monáe. —**LEAH PICKETT** *2016 R*, 111 min. *Outdoor screening. Tue 7/16, 6:30 PM. Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park* **FREE**

RR Non-Fiction

Like Jean-Luc Godard, Olivier Assayas often uses cinema to interrogate the zeitgeist; here, he employs a romantic roundelay narrative to contemplate the future of written communication and the Internet's strong hold on many people's lives. The film takes

place around France's literary world—the setting of Assayas's *Late August, Early September* (1998)—and snakes elegantly through the lives of a publishing executive (Guillaume Canet), his actress wife (Juliette Binoche), a writer of autobiographical novels (Vincent Macaigne), and the writer's political-adviser girlfriend (Christa Théret). In terms of surface tone, this is one of the airiest things the director has made, though what it

Moonlight

has to say about the Internet is as unsettling as *Demon-lover* (2002), perhaps his darkest film. Assayas suggests that the Internet has trained us to dissociate ourselves from our behavior, as revealed by the ease with which most of the characters lie to their romantic partners (tellingly, the original title translates to “double lives”). In French with subtitles. —**BEN SACHS** *R*, 106 min. *Fri 7/12, 6 PM; Sat 7/13, 7:45 PM; Sun 7/14, 3 PM; Mon 7/15, 7:45 PM; Tue 7/16, 8 PM; Wed 7/17, 6 PM; and Thu 7/18, 8 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

N One Nation, One King

For viewers uninformed about the French Revolution, this drama covering the early years of the seminal uprising offers an adequate history lesson, although it's more like a plodding two-hour lecture from a droning teacher than an eye-opener delivered by a radical substitute. Writer-director Pierre Schoeller (*The Minister*) packs in a host of historical events, beginning just after the people's takeover of the Bastille fortress in 1789 and culminating in the execution of King Louis XVI in 1793, but the progress is sluggish. Famous speeches, flashes of violence, and political turning points are weirdly unenergetic and barely dissimilar from scenes of Parisian washerwomen singing by the Seine and ruddy-faced townsfolk conversing by candlelight. A focus on fictional characters, including a young man and woman who fall in love against the backdrop of their rebellion, is less distracting than the insertion of real-life revolutionaries like Maximilien Robespierre and Jean-Paul Marat, who might as well be talking paper dolls for the screen ➔

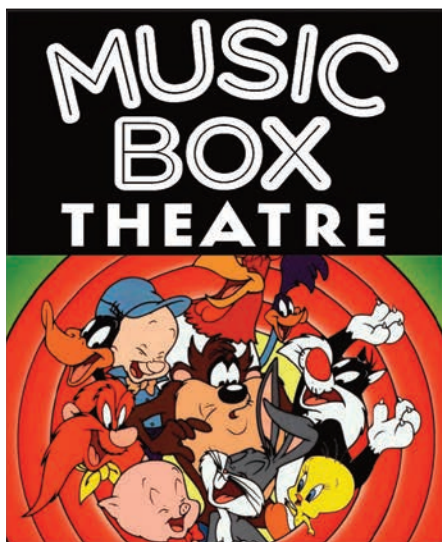
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FILM

➔ time and character development they get. The film looks splendid; if only its golden glow and impressive costumes had contributed to something more exciting. In French with subtitles. —**LEAH PICKETT** 121 min. Fri 7/12, 6 PM, and Sun 7/14, 5 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

RR Paris Is Burning

Jennie Livingston's exuberant and loving 1990 documentary about "voguing" and the drag balls of Harlem is both a celebration and a canny commentary. Delving into the dance poses and acrobatic moves of Black and Latino gay men, she enters this highly ritualized subculture with a genuine sense of curiosity and discovery, and is wise enough to let the participants themselves do most of the explaining. One emerges from this film not only with a new vocabulary and a fresh way of viewing the straight world but with a bracing object lesson in understanding what society "role models" are all about. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** 78 min. Fri 7/12, 4:45 and 9:45 PM; Sat 7/13, 3, 7:15, and 9:30 PM; Sun 7/14, 5 and 9:15 PM; Mon 7/15, 4:45 and 7:15 PM; Tue 7/16, 4:45 and 9:45 PM; Wed 7/17-Thu 7/18, 4:45 and 7:15 PM. Music Box

N The Plagiarists

This low-budget drama advances a compelling formal irony: it's shot on a vintage video camera from the 1990s, but its thematic concerns are all about living in the late 2010s. The story begins in early 2018 when a 30-year-old commercial photographer and his novelist girlfriend get stranded somewhere in the American northeast after their car breaks down. A man in his 50s takes them in for the night, gets them drunk, and regales them with stories about his childhood. The situation seems fine, but several unanswered questions hang in the air. Why does the older man own so many outmoded video cameras? Who is the child staying at his house for the night? And why do the man's soliloquies sound so familiar? Screenwriters James N. Kientz Wilkins and Robin Schavoir (who also produced the film with director Peter Parlow) tease out other questions from the encounter. The young couple is white, while the older man is Black, and the unaddressed sense of unease that pervades their interaction speaks to larger issues about American race relations in the postmodern era. This may seem relaxed and subdued, but its subtle mysteries will likely stay with you well after it ends. —**BEN SACHS** 76 min. Fri 7/12, 7 and 9 PM; Sat 7/13, 3, 5, 7, and 9 PM; Sun 7/14, 1, 3, 5, and 7 PM; Mon 7/15-Thu 7/18, 7 and 9 PM. Facets Cinematheque

N Shelf Life: The Story of Lanzi Candy

For more than a century, Chicago's been known as the "Candy Capital of the World," with treats such as Snickers, Tootsie Rolls, and Milk Duds making their way from the kitchens of local family-run businesses to candy counters everywhere. This documentary spotlights another homegrown confection, Lanzi's Cashew Nut & Rice Crunch. Developed by Elmo Lanzi, an Italian immigrant who built his candy company (machines and all) from the ground up, Lanzi's Cashew Nut & Rice Crunch drew an international cult following before disappearing from shelves in the mid-80s after Lanzi's closed shop. When an entrepreneur expressed interest in rebooting the candy, Lanzi's grandson, the award-winning Chicago filmmaker Michael Lahey, was inspired to document his journey while exploring his family's history and delving deep into the city's sweetest industry. Anyone whose relatives came to the U.S. to pursue the American dream could relate to the Lanzis (and who wouldn't want

The Plagiarists

grandparents like Elmo and Helen?), but Lahey balances their tale with science, commerce, and of course, candy, to make *Shelf Life* more than just a touching family story. —**JAMIE LUDWIG** 88 min. Lahey attends the screenings. Fri 7/12, 3:45 PM; Sat 7/13, 8 PM; and Wed 7/17, 7:45 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

N Sound! Euphonium: The Movie—Our Promise: A Brand New Day

Although much of the anime that gets theatrical distribution on these shores is notable for its diversity, representing genres from fantasy to sci-fi, samurai folk tales, domestic drama, and war stories, in Japan a large share of the anime market is dedicated to stories about nubile schoolgirls. Tatsuya Ishihara directed this latest spin-off of the popular TV series *Sound! Euphonium*, based on the characters in Ayano Takeda's novels and manga about the Kitauji High School Music Club in Uji, Kyoto. The opening scene alludes to a potential romance for the heroine, Kumiko Oumae, who plays the euphonium in the school band, but boys are tangential in what follows, most likely because the male teens (and adults) who make up the target audience would rather watch girls in miniskirt uniforms, knee socks, and thigh-high stockings—fetishistic images that have global currency. But aside from hints at same-sex crushes, the movie is not erotic, focusing instead on the subtleties of Japanese etiquette and protocol and the pressures to excel; it's really about high school as preparation for Japan's complex business culture. The character renderings, particularly some of the close-ups, are skillful, but the most alluring visuals are the painterly backdrops: lush yet delicate, like watercolor washes, they add layers of melancholy and nostalgia to this take on high school and its rites of passage. In Japanese with subtitles (7/11); English dubbed version (7/15). —**ANDREA GRONVALL** 110 min. Ford City, River East 21, Showplace ICON, Webster Place 11

N Yomeddine

An unlikely protagonist sets off on a mission in A.B. Shawky's hero's journeyesque film. After his wife dies, our protagonist, Beshay (a captivating Rady Gamal), leaves his leper colony in northern Egypt for the first time in his life in order to find his long-lost family. We learn that Beshay, who has scars across his hands and face, was abandoned by his family due to his condition and that he leads a humble life selling trash. Beshay is



soon joined by a young companion (Ahmed Abdelhafiz) who is an outcast in his own right. Unsurprisingly, Beshay faces scrutiny and discrimination throughout a journey that reveals the ugly in the world around him more than it reveals the supposed ugly in him. The story has its clichés, but thanks to warm and empathetic performances from a small cast and relatable themes of coming-of-age and identity, *Yomeddine* surpasses its predictability to become a heartfelt film that hits home. In Arabic with subtitles. —**NOËLLE D. LILLEY** 97 min. Fri 7/12, 2 and 8:15 PM; Sat 7/13, 3 PM; Sun 7/14, 5:15 PM; Mon 7/15, 7:45 PM; Tue 7/16, 6 PM; Wed 7/17, 8:15 PM; and Thu 7/18, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

ALSO PLAYING

N Crawl

Alexandre Aja directed this action/horror film about a woman trapped in a house during a hurricane who must fend off alligators. *R*, 87 min. ArcLight, Century 12 and CineArts 6, Chatham 14, Cicero Showplace 14, City North 14, Ford City, River East 21, Showplace 14, Galewood Crossings

N Dinner in Hyde Park

Local filmmaker Jon Silver's *Dinner in Hyde Park* anchors this program of four short films that also includes work by Meghann Artes, Bobby Richards and Avery Lee, and Gustavo Martin. 45 min. Selected filmmakers attend the screening. Sat 7/13, 7 PM. Chicago Filmmakers

N New Breed Film Showcase

A program of short films by local directors, including work by Patrick Wimp, Sanicole, Derek Dow, and Lonnie Edwards. 53 min. Wimp, Sanicole, and Edwards attend the screening. Mon 7/15, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

N Sword of Trust

Lynn Shelton directed this comedy about a woman who inherits her grandfather's antique sword, which he believed served as proof that the Confederacy won the Civil War. *R*, 88 min. Actor Marc Maron attends the screenings. Mon 7/15, 7 and 9:30 PM. Music Box

Windy City International Film Festival

A four-day festival of features and shorts programs. Thu 7/18-Sun 7/21. Visit windycityfilmfest.com for a complete schedule. Victory Gardens Theater

Kaina gives her soulful R&B the intimacy of real and chosen family



The Chicago singer-songwriter's debut album takes its strength from her favorite people: her friends and collaborators, her childhood mentors, her immigrant parents.

By LEOR GALIL

On Sunday, March 24, singer-songwriter Kaina Castillo spent the day with her parents at her childhood home in Irving Park, working on a music video for the song “Green.” The director, singer-rapper Jean Deaux, wanted to film what Kaina considered a perfect day: spending time with her family and friends and kicking back with drinks and a good meal.

When the small crew arrived at Kaina's parents' place around 7 AM for the shoot, her mother, Maritza, had prepared orange juice and coffee for them. “I never realized how hard it is to make a video,” Maritza says. “It's amazing that you work the whole day for a few minutes. But I was so happy, everybody was so nice—like a family.” Kaina's father, Rene, turned 54 years old that same day, so in a way the shoot doubled as a birthday party for him.

Kaina's dream day didn't include work, but there was lots of it to be done. Her friends and family—including her brother and her godmother—helped out to make sure the shoot stayed on track. “We were trying to hang up a clothing line, and my mom was like, ‘I did this in Venezuela, and you guys are not doing it right,’” Kaina says. “She took matters into her own hands and nailed shit to the wall, ‘cause me and Jean Deaux were trying to tape things.”

Maritza also cooked for the whole cast and crew—roughly 20 people. The video's opening shots include close-ups of her hands working dough for the five dozen arepas she made that day. Kaina is definitely the star, but her loved ones give the video its warmth and intimacy. Nothing onscreen tells you that you're looking at her parents, for instance, or at her closest colleagues (including rapper, singer, and

producer Sen Morimoto), but it's obvious that these people are special to her.

In April, the Fader premiered the video for “Green,” which Kaina had chosen as the first single from her debut full-length, *Next to the Sun*. The album comes out Friday through Sooper Records, an artist-run label owned by Morimoto, Nnamdi Ogbonnaya, and Glenn Curran. Kaina, 23, has been a fixture on Chicago's overlapping hip-hop and soul scenes the past four years, both onstage and behind the scenes; she freelances in show programming and production, and last year she hit the road as a tour manager with Chicago R&B darling Ravyn Lenae. Kaina's star has begun to rise in part thanks to collaborations with friends—she's among the three guest vocalists on Saba's *Care for Me*, one of 2018's best albums.

Kaina has a powerful, earthy voice that she uses with an inviting restraint. Her nu- ➔

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anced, earnest singing immediately charmed Chris Swanson, who co-owns Indiana indie label Secretly Canadian as well as its distributor, Secretly Group, which handles Sooper's releases. He first saw Kaina in late 2017, when he drove to Chicago for a Morimoto show at Soho House and she was also on the bill. "I was just blown away by her voice," Swanson says. "It immediately resonated. I was like, 'She's a star.'"

Kaina had yet to sign with Sooper in late 2018, when Secretly Group struck its deal with the label, but Swanson sees her as part of what makes it special. "With that core of artists—Nnamdi, Sen, and Kaina—it feels like that's a nucleus for making a really strong label," he says. He followed her from afar, listening to her EP *4u* (which she self-released in March 2018) and her subsequent singles. "I felt like she was continuing to tell a really exciting story," Swanson says.

On *Next to the Sun*, Kaina delves into her experiences as a first-generation American, an approach she drives home by involving her family in the "Green" video. "I am the beginning of a literal family in the U.S.," Kaina says. "We don't have a lot of space we own for ourselves in the U.S. Building a video like this, it's cool to have a piece of art that's like, if there's any legacy, it's this. We all built this."

"You with your walls, you're so proud / You stay so happy keeping all us out / You like to keep this place so empty / Look how these brown hands cook all your meals / But mama says you want us all to disappear / You like to keep this place so empty"

—Kaina, "House"

Kaina wrote the *Next to the Sun* track "House" as a high school student at Lane Tech. Even after she graduated in 2014, she kept it under wraps for several years, refraining from recording or performing it. "I didn't feel comfortable talking about the world and immigration, especially because it felt so close to my heart and close to a lot of families that I see around me," she says. "I didn't feel comfortable until now to release it, because it was really personal."

Maritza emigrated from Caracas, Venezuela, in the mid-80s at the invitation of Kaina's godmother, Fanny Gimenez, who'd just had a baby in Chicago and asked Maritza to help with child care. Gimenez works for the Venezuelan consulate here, and through her job she introduced Maritza to prominent Vene-



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zuelans in town—including Ozzie Guillén and Wilson Álvarez from the White Sox. When the ballplayers’ families needed help looking after children or taking care of chores, they turned to Maritza.

Kaina’s father, Rene, came to Chicago from Guatemala in 1991, staying with an aunt who already lived here till he got settled. Rene and Maritza met in 1995 through mutual friends. They liked to hit the town together, and Kaina says they used to go to Latin clubs and dance till 5 AM. “Then I came and ruined their fucking life,” she says. “They were at all the Jordan games—they were going to all that shit.” Kaina was born January 22, 1996, just before the Bulls started their second threeppeat.

“I always tell Kaina, ‘I think you were born with music,’” Maritza says. “That first Christmas, I got a doll for her—she took the doll out from the box, she put the doll away, she got the box, and she started playing the box like a drum.”

Kaina got her first meaningful taste of performing at an Audubon Elementary School pageant. “I remember singing this part, and these kids turned around and gave me weird

faces,” she says. “Looking back, I’m like, ‘Oh, maybe I could sing.’”

By age nine she knew she wanted to sing, but she says she was too shy. That year, when she found out about the Happiness Club, a performing-arts extracurricular aimed at grade-schoolers, she auditioned as a dancer. “That was all my training,” she says. “It was my training as a human being. It was my training as a performer when I didn’t even know it.”

The *Next to the Sun* song “Joei” opens with a recording of Joei Simone Langford, daughter of Happiness Club artistic director Tanji Harper, talking about what it means to have a crush. Langford is nine—the same age Kaina was when she first met Harper. “Tanji became like a second mom,” Kaina says.

The Happiness Club works with kids across the city, mainly from neighborhoods short on resources for young people, including Bronzeville, Chatham, Englewood, and Pilsen. Students get dance and vocal training and assistance with choreographing and writing their own shows, which are intended for youth audiences. Kaina performed for children throughout Chicago.

“I got to come across a lot of different kinds of kids in neighborhoods,” she says. “I don’t have a big family—I feel like I could have easily been whitewashed and assimilated into the country. But because of a group like this, I really had a lot of opportunity to see a bunch of things, and even go outside of Chicago for the first time.” During the ten years or so that Kaina participated in the Happiness Club, she performed twice at the Obama White House and appeared in 2010 on Lollapalooza’s Kid-zapalooza stage.

Late in her tenure with the Happiness Club, Kaina switched roles, but she spent most of that decade dancing. “I got really fucking good,” she says. “I quit dancing around 16, ‘cause I was like, ‘I don’t want to do this anymore,’ and ended up singing and writing songs for the group.” By then she was a sophomore at Lane Tech and had started going to other people’s shows—she never skipped a date by the O’My’s or Saba. “One day, all of those people were like, ‘I see you at every single show—who are you?’” she recalls.

In 2014 Kaina formed her first band, a soul-funk combo called the Loop. The summer after she graduated, they played a noon set at

Postock, a Wisconsin festival launched in 2008 as a graduation party for a small group of Chicago musicians. Despite the Loop’s early slot, O’My’s front man Maceo Haymes and Ohmme singer-guitarist Macie Stewart were in the crowd. “I remember it just being so bad—it was so bad,” Kaina says. “Maceo’s always like, ‘No, you had a great voice then too.’”

The Loop sputtered out once people started leaving for college that fall. Kaina went to DePaul to study public relations and advertising, but she was getting more out of two internships she’d been working since high school. The first was with Mariah Neuroth, director of production for Young Chicago Authors, who also managed Noname and the O’My’s. Neuroth introduced Kaina to Sharod Smith, manager of soul-pop duo M&O, aka Jamila Woods and Owen Hill, and she started interning for him too. Kaina and Smith bonded when she stage-managed M&O’s record-release show at Double Door in April 2014.

“The folks who are running the show have a responsibility to be calm,” Smith says. “I’m just naturally calm, and she was the other calm person that was able to navigate the chaos. That’s a skill that not a lot of people ➔

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actually have—she's able to remain calm in such chaotic environments, which is why she's worked for damn near everybody in the city."

Within a couple years, Kaina had a full Rolodex of people eager to hire her as a freelance manager for live events. By the time she dropped out of college in September 2016, early in her junior year, she'd used those jobs to build up a financial cushion.

"DePaul was my first experience really feeling like I didn't belong somewhere in my own city—it was really disorienting," Kaina says. "I was the only brown kid in my PR and ad classes. It was really tough for me to get into my first years of adulthood and start to notice things like microaggressions. Like, Lane Tech and my elementary school were really diverse, and the Happiness Club was obviously culturally enriching. But getting to DePaul, I didn't have any friends."

Kaina met Sen Morimoto at a Hungry Brain show in November 2016, a few weeks after she dropped out. Morimoto was there to see his friend Nnamdi Ogbon-naya, and Kaina was also on the bill. Since then they've become best friends, and on the *Next to the Sun* single "Could Be a Curse" they trade verses in English and in their second languages, Spanish and Japanese.

That fall she had to confront her difficult decision to leave school as well as the disillusioning consequences of pursuing music as a career, not just as a passion. She'd cut back on her involvement with the Happiness Club, and by the end of 2016 she'd quit entirely. She'd also started working with Eddie and Iz Burns, 18-year-old twin brothers who perform and record as the Burns Twins. Kaina, the twins, and producer Bedows released an EP called *Sweet Asl* in August 2016, which got a Fake Shore Drive plug. "It just blew up," Kaina says. The song "La Luna" has nearly two million plays on Spotify—a big number for the debut of a young act that never toured.

Navigating the business side of music soured Kaina, though. "This is crazy, these are my diary entries—now I have to think about music as a business as opposed to something that liberates me. It feels like I am just something to make a profit off of now," she says. "It felt really shitty. But Sen really helped me through that slump."

Morimoto loved Kaina's Hungry Brain performance. "It was one of my favorite sets I've ever seen," he says. Soon he reached out to her to join the band he was putting together for his Tomorrow Never Knows set at Lincoln Hall in January 2017. She said yes before she'd



© MERCEDES ZAPATA

heard any of his music. As they hung out more, they developed an informal routine. "On the weekends, we would go see something—go to a garden or go to a temple—and then we would go work on some music," Morimoto says.

Kaina had handfuls of unfinished demos, but no motivation to finish them. "Sen was like, 'You should finish this. You need to finish this,'" she says. Kaina eventually wrapped up three songs, recording with Morimoto during lengthy hangout sessions at his apartment or hers. She released them in March 2018 as the *4u* EP, and within weeks she'd also appeared on three key Chicago releases: Saba's *Care for Me*, Morimoto's *Cannonball!*, and Joseph Williams's EP *The Plastics*.

Kaina got more exposure, but once again she felt her momentum falter. She'd grown frustrated with what she saw as the one-sided emotional content of her material. "I was having a really hard time being honest about the kind of stuff I wanted to write," she says. "My previous music, it's all really sweet, loving, and full of positivity, and that's great. But I got to a place where I was like, 'It's not sustainable to only show that you are a happy person all the time—it's just not true.'"

Her desire to be more transparent meant engaging with parts of herself she hadn't addressed in her music, including her family history. Her Spanish lyrics on "Could Be a Curse" are her first in her parents' native language. As he had for *4u*, Morimoto encouraged Kaina to flesh out her demos, and they produced *Next to the Sun* together.

When it came time for Kaina to think about how to release the album, Morimoto gingerly suggested Sooper. But he also wanted

to encourage his friend to take the route she thought was best for her music. "It was funny to be on both sides of that," Morimoto says. "If there was a better option or something, I'd be like, 'You should go for it.' Or if Sooper feels comfortable. . . . The important thing, really, is that once your album is out, it's not, like, spoiled by whoever's running the business side of it." Sooper felt right to Kaina, though, and she signed with the label in March 2019.

On "Could Be a Curse," Kaina sings, "Tanto trabajar y no tengo nada," which she translates as "I've worked so hard and still have nothing." It's a lyric from the 1979 hit "Tanto Trabajar" by Venezuelan band Billo's Caracas Boys, which Kaina's parents played a lot when she was growing up. She says they shared the sentiment in that line—and that they picked up on her reference immediately. "This time, my parents got to see how I'm trying to ingrain all of these pieces into a thing," Kaina says.

The day Kaina filmed "Green," she got to experience what it was like for her parents to see her vision in full for the first time. The shoot took over their home for an entire day, but they didn't mind—in fact they seemed to love feeling like part of what she'd made with her friends. "My mom and I were doing our scene where we are hugging each other, and she turned to me and she just says, 'Thank you.' I lost it," Kaina says. "There's that last shot where I had just been tearing up, and I was like, 'Oh man—they got it.'" **A**

@imLeor

A Reader staffer shares three musical obsessions, then asks someone (who asks someone else) to take a turn.

IN ROTATION

LEOR GALIL

Reader staff writer

Presenting zine Chicago writer Miranda Reinert gave eight women and nonbinary people active in underground punk spaces disposable cameras to document their lives and fashion choices, and their photos accompany Reinert's interviews in this thoughtful zine. I love *Presenting* because it captures what it means to be involved in a music community: bands are part of the fabric but not always the focus, because a scene can enrich your life in so many other ways. Plus, I can relate to Retirement Party front woman Avery Springer, who compares her dress sense to that of Nickelodeon cartoon star Doug Funnie.



The Algebra Suicide reissue *Still Life* compiles 16 tracks from several different releases.

Algebra Suicide Shout-out to San Francisco reissue label Dark Entries for continuing to show love to Algebra Suicide, an arty Chicago postpunk duo active from 1982 till 1994. This month the label drops its second Algebra Suicide reissue, the compilation *Still Life*. It's a good starting point if you want to explore the duo's stark, borderline creepy synth songs and the vividly impressionistic lyrics and dry delivery of front woman Lydia Tomkiw. Tomkiw, who was also a poet and visual artist, died in 2007, and it's comforting to see her legacy preserved—even though her songs get right under my skin.

Ian Fink, *The Order* Detroit keyboardist and producer Ian Fink weaves together house, jazz, and boogie using synths, an MPC, and a little live percussion. He gives a lot of life to his minimalist tracks, and I don't think I'll ever get tired of the shuffling beat on "Pt. 3."

DAVE COLLIS

Guitarist and vocalist in Slow Mass

Big|Brave, *A Gaze Among Them* I was fond of this Montreal-based trio's previous album, *Arbor*, but Big|Brave's newest release for Southern Lord is spacious and uplifting yet still dense and devastating. At the four-minute mark of the eight-minute opener, I found myself completely in awe of this band's sonic reach. It sounds like the world is ending peacefully inside a blender.

The YouTube comment section of Thou's NPR Tiny Desk Concert The Internet continues to prove that it is an unforgiving dumpster fire. Thou forever.

Mannequin Pussy's perfect new album, *Patience* I've talked to several people recently who've told me they don't like this band's name. Welp... sorry you're missing out! Mannequin Pussy is incredible! This entire album is flawless! I could listen to it on repeat for hours! I first saw them five years ago, and it's been such a treat to watch them grow since then—and seeing them play this new material when we toured together last year was mind-blowing. The pop songs are catchier. The hardcore songs are meaner. I absolutely love Mannequin Pussy. You should too.



Mannequin Pussy @ MARCUS MADDOX

MACIE STEWART Guitarist, violinist, keyboardist, and singer in Ohmme

Karen Meat I love this band. Ohmme played with them and got to stay with them when we were touring through Iowa City, and I don't think I've smiled so much at a show before. The songs are incredible, hilarious, and brutally honest, while staying danceable the whole time. They played at the Hideout the other night, and now I can't stop singing "I'm sorry I stole your boyfriend" and "Can you and I please share a dinner? I'd like to take you on a date but I'm too poor." Listen to them now!



Karen Meat @ ALEXANDRIA CRAHAN

Pauline Oliveros, *Anthology of Text Scores* I've been getting into alternative methods of scoring music, and Pauline Oliveros was one of the masters. Her text scores read like poetry as well as a way to communicate musical ideas. I think it's fascinating to explore a more universal method of composition, one that can be performed by a wider scope of musicians—including those who might not be familiar with traditional Western notation. It's a really fun anthology to flip through.

Flipshot's remix of Jeff Goldblum's famous laugh from *Jurassic Park* I thought I'd go back and revisit some classic 90s films, and *Jurassic Park* was at the top of my list. After I told some people I was watching it, a friend sent me a link to a hilarious remix of Jeff Goldblum's laugh from the scene where he's teasing Sam Neill and Laura Dern in the helicopter on the way to the island. It's by somebody who goes by Flipshot, and it's ridiculous.

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MUSIC



D'Angelo DaReef (left) usually hosts a dozen folks from South Carolina for Chosen Few weekend. At lower left he's joined by his wife, Vanessa (white shorts), and their friends and family. That's his chicken grilling at lower right.

© ZAKKIYYAH NAJEEBAH



The grill masters of the Chosen Few Picnic

More music festivals should let fans cook for each other.

By LEOR GALIL

The Chosen Few Picnic is the Saturday nearest July 4, and its single day provides Chicagoans with a blueprint for the perfect summer: all you need is good music, friends and family, and lots of barbecue. House DJ collective the Chosen Few launched the picnic in 1990 as part of the Hatchett family barbecue behind the Museum of Science and Industry—DJs Andre and Tony Hatchett are original members of the Chosen Few. The picnic settled in Jackson Park in 2008, and these days it's one of the biggest Black festivals in the city, drawing crowds of nearly 50,000 people—dozens if not hundreds of whom spend the day cooking, providing the event with much of its backyard-party charm.

On Saturday, July 6, I went to the 29th Chosen Few Picnic with photographer Zakkiyyah

Najeebah to learn more about the experience of making food at the picnic. Mack Mason, for example, helped run four grills on behalf of the Public League, a bar and restaurant in suburban Harvey whose owner likes to offer Chosen Few fans free food. Mason and his crew came prepared to feed about 150 people, with options for every meal of the day. He made omelets when he arrived just after 9 AM, then moved on to jerk chicken, turkey links, and burgers.

Other cooks were just as generous, and came with large groups of people ready to eat their food. Bryson Lenon and Neishe Russell, who became friends at Northern Illinois University in the early 2000s, prepared a variety of meats for a loose collection of high school and college pals as well as their family members. They'd reportedly made quite a feast last year, including cedar-plank salmon and lobster tail, and as we left Lenon, he was prepping a tomahawk rib-eye with his own dry rub.

The smell of grilling meat filled the air throughout the park, which made Sean Griffin's cooking even more distinctive. He



Neishe Russell (top) helps cook for a crowd of high school and college friends and family. A fashionable fan (middle) enjoys the picnic. And Vanessa DaReef (bottom) is prepared for the Chosen Few tradition of contributing to the beat.

© ZAKKIYAH NAJEEBAH

stir-fried a mess of vegetables—peppers, squash, zucchini, portobello mushrooms, white onion—in a wok with a little oil and salt. This was Griffin's second time at the picnic, and most of the cooks we spoke with were repeaters. One grill master, who preferred to go by his nickname, Roc, had been part of an old house crew called Gucci Productions and started attending the picnic in the early 90s. Ken Taylor, who carted his friend's barrel grill



Bryson Lenon (top) applies dry rub to a tomahawk rib-eye. Mack Mason (bottom) from Harvey bar and restaurant Public League grills free jerk chicken and burgers. © ZAKKIYAH NAJEEBAH

into the park on a homemade dolly, says he's been to the picnic 20 times.

Fred Anderson was in charge of the grill for Nu Bang Clan, a DJ and production collective whose members also include Alan King of the Chosen Few. Their crew's name was emblazoned on a large white tent, which protected several tables of food. Anderson spent two days preparing everything for the picnic.

D'Angelo DaReef normally spends two days prepping too, but this year he got everything done in one. He and his wife, Vanessa, treat Chosen Few weekend as a staycation, and open their house to a dozen friends and family who come up from South Carolina. D'Angelo loves cooking, and he and Vanessa are eager to share his pulled pork, ribs, chicken, sausages, and pasta salad—and not just with the folks they've invited.

"That's the whole purpose of having all this food—we know we gonna feed someone else," Vanessa says. "You can come here broke and hungry, and leave here happy and full." ■

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JUL 21 KIZZ DANIEL

JUL 24 CONOR OBERST

JUL 26 THE MARÍAS

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PICK OF THE WEEK

MPLS-obsessed Beach Slang are back with a new EP called *MPLS*



BEACH SLANG, WREATH OF HOGS, YOUNG MAN IN A HURRY
Sun 7/14, 9 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$15. 21+

CHARLIE LOWE

WHEN PHILADELPHIA'S BEACH SLANG first appeared in 2014 with a couple of EPs, I was fully obsessed. Fronted by former pop punker James Alex Snyder, who spent the 90s confronting Weston, the band produced hook-filled brilliance by summoning the heart-felt, clean-channel warmth of punks-turned-alt-rock-icons such as the Replacements, Hüsker Dü, and the Lemonheads and adding a big tip of the hat to radio-ready acts such as Goo Goo Dolls and the Gin Blossoms. I couldn't get enough, and I wasn't alone. Beach Slang were suddenly everywhere, and they quickly put out a full-length on Polyvinyl, 2015's *The Things We Do to Find People*. The first time I saw them play was on their tour for that album, and it burst my bubble—their live show was frankly annoying. Snyder's nervous energy was cranked to 11, and he constantly stopped songs halfway through to tell random stories or ramble on endlessly; just as aggravating, the band played two Replacements

covers, as if we didn't already know they were fans. Between that disappointing experience and the band's highly publicized drama, which included onstage breakups, swift reunions, and a revolving-door lineup, Beach Slang soon became too much for me. To be totally honest, I stopped paying attention. I completely missed the band's second full-length, 2016's *A Loud Bash of Teenage Feelings*, and 2018's all-acoustic LP *Everything Matters but No One Is Listening*, which they released as Quiet Slang. In fact, I didn't listen to Beach Slang again until this year, when they released the EP *MPLS*—named after the city that Snyder can't stop fucking talking about. And guess what? It's really, really good, and I feel silly for ever cutting Beach Slang off. The EP's two tracks are stacked with everything that made the band's first recordings so good. I'm sorry, Beach Slang: I was in the wrong, and you are still a helluva band. —LUCA CIMARUSTI

FRIDAY12

ÁLEX ANWANDTER *DJ Resistol 5000* opens.
9:30 PM, Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont, \$35. 17+

Santiago-born singer-songwriter, composer, and film director Álex Anwandter has been dubbed the prince of Chilean pop, no small honor given that the country's vibrant post-dictatorship scene attracted the first South American Lollapalooza in 2011. Anwandter identifies as queer and has a large LGBTQ+ following, and at the 34th annual Guadalajara International Film Festival this year he received the Premio Maguey Queer Icon award, given to artists who support or embody an open, transgressive, and sexually diverse culture. He's known for concept-driven albums that set his emotional lyrics to soaring 80s-influenced dance anthems, and he explores political topics in his songs and music videos, which he directs himself. In "Cordillera" he pays homage to Chilean musicians such as Victor Jara (murdered by the Pinochet regime) and Violeta Parra, while in "Rebeldes" he turns the conversation toward fluid gender roles and queer desire. Anwandter is also a multi-instrumentalist (he plays guitar, piano, and violin) and supports his captivating live performances with sophisticated visuals. His fourth solo album, last year's *Latinoamericana*, recently came out on vinyl, and lead single "Locura" (which he's called a "danceable lament about madness in a 'world going to shit'") captures the essence of his music: it's a deep dive into the current state of society accompanied by supremely catchy pop hooks. —CATALINA MARIA JOHNSON



Álex Anwandter TSARINA MARRIN



TWRP COURTESY THE ARTIST

COVET Vasudeva and Holy Fawn open. 7:30 PM, Schubas, 3159 N. Southport, \$15.

The music of math-rock bands such as the Ruins, Tricot, Lightning Bolt, and Don Caballero is often loud, swaggering, and aggressive, and at the very least angular and spiky. But California three-piece Covet manage to make the rapid time-signature changes and arpeggiated figures that seem intrinsic to the style sound laid-back. The band's music has some parallels with the classical-jazz fusion of Japanese pianist Hiromi, but because front woman and guitarist Yvette Young provides its foundation with her intricate, liquid strings of notes, it has a welcome rock edge. On Covet's 2018 album, *Effloresce* (Sony), they turn the impossibly twisted melody that opens "Falkor" into a catchy tune through sheer virtuosity, à la Coltrane's "Giant Steps." They showcase their dexterity throughout the record: On

"Howl" they deliver the world's smoothest stagger, with Young weaving her guitar lines around a fractured prog beat laid down by drummer Forrest Rice. "Shibuya," which features Dutch DJ Han Soso, is jaunty enough to work as an indie-pop soundtrack for a hit teen drama. As with all math-rock bands, it's a treat to watch Covet assemble their music live—Young's fingers run up and down the fretboard like amphetamine-fueled but nonetheless very mellow spiders. —NOAH BERLATSKY

IMELDA MARCOS *Big Syn and Not for You* open. 9 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$10. 21+

Chicago is home to lots of technically savvy rock weirdos obsessed with unconventional song structures, odd time signatures, and controlled chaos. I've wondered often why London four-piece Black

Midi has gotten so much international hype for their (perfectly fine) debut album, given that I can walk into Subterranean's downstairs venue on a Tuesday and see three local bands with just as much or more face-melting proficiency. I hope at least some of the folks getting turned on to askew rock via Black Midi end up finding these Chicago acts—and Imelda Marcos would be a great place to start. The instrumental noise-rock duo play the Empty Bottle to celebrate their new third album, *Tatlo* (Already Dead), where guitarist Dave Cosejo and drummer Matt Durso explore the language of rock by finessing together blistering melodic attacks and serene, glacial interludes. On "Brokenfinger Tea LLC," Cosejo weaves metallic shrieks and beefed-up, funky grooves around Durso's tastefully sparse drumming, and then they both take a surprising turn: the song ends with the sort of dank, furious instrumental Korn wish they could still write. I mean that as the highest of compliments—more experimental rockers should take such risks. —LEOR GALIL

TWRP *Protomen* open. 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln, sold out.

Toronto synth-pop group TWRP ("Tupper Ware Remix Party," allegedly) have a cutesy but somewhat vague 80s sci-fi backstory: front man Doctor Sung, for instance, is supposed to have traveled through space and time to find his bandmates. Onstage each member of the group wears a cos-

tume that blurs futurism with fantasy—bassist Commander Meouch combines a lion mask with a getup that looks like something out of *Mega Man*. TWRP have aligned themselves with comedy groups, most notably Ninja Sex Party, and they like to write goofy lyrics about "atomic karate" (karate moves as powerful as a neutron bomb, of course), exploit sappy memories of dead pets for laughs, or breathlessly recount the murderous exploits of a phantom race-car driver. In fact their shtick would be pretty cloying if their music wasn't great—their tight blend of disco and funk could fill any boogie fanatic's heart. TWRP's self-released 2018 album, *Together Through Time*, goes on a little too long for its own good, with too many exaggerated punch lines, but when the band cool it with the high jinks they make serious gold. When the chorus of "Synthesize Her" kicks off with the one-two punch of a gaudy synth glissando and a tight bass line, I can picture a dance floor erupting with joy. —LEOR GALIL

SATURDAY13

CHRIS FORSYTH & THE BROKEN MIRRORS
MOTEL BAND *Health & Beauty* open. 9:30 PM, Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$12. 21+

East-coast native Chris Forsyth has been making waves the past few years as a nouveau guitar god. His approach to his craft positions him some- ➔

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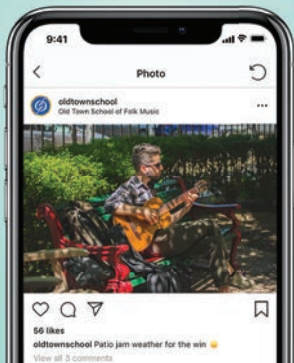
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MUSIC



Covet HOWIE CHEN

continued from 41

where between classicists (Jerry Garcia, Richard Thompson) and improvising avant-garde rule breakers (Loren Connors, Robert Quine). This makes it less surprising to find out that Forsyth was tutored by Television's Richard Lloyd—whose own aesthetic encompasses all those virtuosic guitar styles—while living in New York in the late 90s and early 00s. In 2003, Forsyth started the self-described “gothic junk folk expressionist” trio Peeesseye with Chicago musician Jaime Fennelly (Mind Over Mirrors) and Glasgow-based drummer Fritz Welch, and at the end of the decade he moved to Philly, where he began concentrating on acoustic guitar picking in the vein of Jack Rose. Forsyth attracted acclaim as a solo artist for years before emerging as a band leader on 2013's *Solar Motel* (Paradise of Bachelors), whose triumphant, defiant-but-classic jams touched a nerve among listeners—some hailed it as a modern guitar-stormin' masterpiece. Thus the Solar Motel Band were born, and the following year they released their first proper album, 2014's *Solar Live* (as Chris Forsyth & the Solar Motel Band), via No Quarter Records. Since then, Forsyth and varying configurations of the group have stayed busy—just like the sprawling solos on their excessive 2016 double LP, *The Rarity of Experience*. In April, Forsyth dropped the new album *All Time Present* under his own name, though it includes contributions from longtime co-conspirators such as bassist Peter Kerlin (Sunwatchers) and drummer Ryan Jewell (Ryley Walker). And this three-date tour by Chris Forsyth & the Broken Mirrors Motel Band features yet another group: locals Fennelly, Doug McCombs, and Areif Sless-Kitain. Like its predecessors, this new configuration probably won't last long, but McCombs's elastic Tortoise-ian bass should be a perfect foil for Forsyth's guitar landscapes—miss this all-star jam at your peril. —**STEVE KRAKOW**

LYDIA LUNCH VERBAL BURLESQUE *Baby Magic and Forced Into Femininity* open. 7 PM, *Reggies' Music Joint*, second floor, 2105 S. State, \$18, \$15 in advance. 18+

Two years ago, legendary avant-garde artist Lydia Lunch brought her all-star no-wave revival band Retrovirus to Chop Shop. The group laid down a charismatic, devastatingly tight set that wove together works from all phases of the singer's storied career and even included crowd-pleasing Pere Ubu and Suicide covers. Her latest project is a very different type of act, despite containing two Retrovirus members: bassist, keyboardist, and sound artist Tim Dahl and drummer Weasel Walter (guitarist in Retrovirus), a former Chicagoan who leads the notorious (and recently reactivated) Flying Luttenbachers. Their collaboration, *Verbal Burlesque*, is a noisy trio that combines spoken word and improvisation. Lunch has been releasing music ever since emerging from New York's 70s no-wave and noise scene, and she has equally deep roots as a poet, writer, and darkly hilarious ranter. Walter tells me that he has no idea what Lunch's screed topics du jour will be, but their 2016 collaboration, the long-form composition *Brutal Measures*, probably provides a decent idea of their sonic attack at tonight's show: clattering drums and roaring, hissing electronics create a jagged but supportive nest for Lunch's chanting, hectoring, harrowing, and sometimes evilly playful performance. It's a rare artist who can stand in the center of a such a storm without ceasing for a moment to be the center of attention. Lunch, Walter, and Dahl have worked together long enough to have a second-nature understanding of each other's madness and methods, and their interplay in this format should be electric. —**MONICA KENDRICK**

SUNDAY14

BEACH SLANG See *Pick of the Week*, page 38.
9 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$15. 21+

MONDAY15

JUNIOR BROWN 8 PM, City Winery, 1200 W. Randolph, \$25-\$35. 18+

Country artist Junior Brown has a droll baritone reminiscent of Johnny Cash that works well in funny songs, including “Highway Patrol” and “My Wife Thinks You’re Dead.” But as great as his voice is, what keeps drawing the fans in is his thundering ax work. His live sets are designed to show off his proficiency on his custom-made guit-steel—a visually compelling double-necked instrument that joins a guitar and a lap steel. Though he’s often seen as a savior of traditional C&W, he’s likely to slip a few cross-genre crowd-pleasers into his show; you can expect homages to Jimi Hendrix and various surf-guitar legends, and he performs them deftly enough to amaze even his most faithful fans. Brown’s not all about flashy playing, though, and on his first album in more than a decade, last year’s *Deep in the Heart of Me*, he showcases his often overlooked talent for ballads. He hasn’t exactly become a love-song crooner (unless you can find romance in a song called “The Cockeyed Cop From Camp Kankakee”), but the tunes move at a more relaxed, leisurely pace than his jittery rockabilly-influenced material. And while *Deep in the Heart of*

Me deviates slightly from Brown’s usual program, when he gets onstage he’ll doubtless still find new ways to burn the joint down. —**JAMES PORTER**

TUESDAY16

MICHAEL MORLEY’S NEVER QUARTET PROJECT 7 PM, International Museum of Surgical Science, 1524 N. Lake Shore Dr., \$22. 18+

Michael Morley has been making music that teeters on the edge of collapse since 1980, when he and fellow teenager Richard Ram formed the bedroom-pop duo Wreck Small Speakers on Expensive Stereos. The New Zealand-based singer and multi-instrumentalist is one-third of the Dead C, a long-running group whose entropic music draws elements of rock, electroacoustic composition, and free improvisation into a vortex at the point where primitive means and sophisticated aesthetics converge. He is also the sole constant member of Gate, whose diverse catalog includes a hostile takeover of disco (on the 2016 12-inch *Saturday Night Fever*) and walls of dysphoric, electronic noise. Morley rarely recorded under his own name until 2015, when he began making solo records of guitar music that vary in style but consistently evoke musical stasis. In his latest endeavor, the Never Quartet, Morley places four acoustic guitars on pieces of wooden furniture and uses elbows on the strings, causing the instruments and the objects supporting them to resonate. In concert, listeners are encouraged to record the music in progress and then play their recordings back into the vibrating maelstrom. —**BILL MEYER**



Lydia Lunch © AUDREY PENVEN

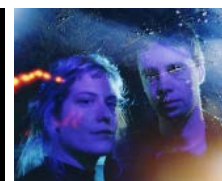
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Joshua Abrams's Natural Information Society, Jim White & Marisa Anderson 7/21, 9 PM, Hideout
Lauren Anderson 8/10, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Anji's Top Dollar Blues Band, Joanna Connor Band 7/18, 7:30 PM, Kingston Mines
Appleseed Cast, Muscle Worship 9/5, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM
Marcia Ball Band 11/8, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM
Band Royale, Highdiver, Tomblands 7/26, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge
Baynk, Ilo Ilo 8/1, 11 PM, Chop Shop, 18+
Betraying the Martyrs, Entheos 7/22, 7 PM, the Forge, Joliet
Beyond Creation, Fallujah, Arkaik, Equipoise 9/20, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Blackalicious 8/24, 7 PM, Subterranean
BoDeans 11/30, 7 and 10 PM; 12/1, 7 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 7/12, noon
Jay Bolotin, Girls of the Golden West 7/19, 6 PM, Hideout
Boy Harsher, Spelling 10/9, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
Billy Branch & the Sons of Blues 7/19-7/20, 9 PM, Rosa's Lounge
Bumpus 7/26, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen
Cam, Ness Heads, Zealyn 7/23, 8 PM, House of Blues, 17+
Cash Box Kings 7/28, 9:30 PM, Buddy Guy's Legends
Cattle Decapitation 7/24, 5 PM, the Forge, Joliet
Catzilla 7: A Cat Fest with music by Violet and more 8/23-8/24, 8 PM, Hairpin Arts Center

Chicago Farmer, Althea Grace 10/3, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 7/12, noon
Chocquibtown 8/10, 8 PM, Patio Theater
ComplexCon day one with Ella Mai, Tobin Lou, Lucki, Young Guru, King Marie, Smoko Ono, Big Once, DJ Cut-Cuz 7/20, 11 AM, McCormick Place
ComplexCon day two with Schoolboy Q, Taylor Bennett, Saweetie, Austin Mills, Vic Lloyd, Siobhan Bell, Boi Jeanius, Joe Freshgoods, Rae Chardonnay 7/21, 11 AM, McCormick Place
Conflict 9/12, 8 PM, Reggie's Music Joint
Corrosion of Conformity, the Skull, Mothership, Witch Mountain 9/27, 7:30 PM, the Forge, Joliet
Ralph Covert's Acoustic Army 7/20, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Loona Dae, Blake Davis, Ben Burden 9/1, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Dark Star Orchestra 9/26, 7:30 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM, 18+
Dessa 9/7, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Virgil Donati Band 9/17, 7 PM, Reggie's Music Joint
Josie Dunne 9/26, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge
Empath 9/10, 9:30 PM, Hideout
Neal Francis, Alex Wasily's Very Good Band 9/21, 9 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM, 18+
Robbie Fulks 8/9, 9:30 PM, Hideout
Ezra Furman, Speedy Ortiz, Stef Chura 9/7, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Galcher Lustwerk 7/20, 8 PM, Virgin Hotel
Girl K, Pleasures, Lava Gullas,

Foxbee 8/18, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Sidney Gish 7/27, 9:30 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+
Grayscale, Belmont, Bearings 9/28, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 7/12, noon
Rod Hamdallah, Dyes 7/30, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Beres Hammond, Harmony House Musicians, DJ Inferno 7/31, 8 PM, Patio Theater
Hideout Dance Party with Donny Benét 8/10, 11:59 PM, Hideout
Honeysuckle 7/31, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Japanese House 10/22, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM, 17+
Jaymes Young 11/16, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM
Joseph, Deep Sea Diver 9/21, 7:30 PM, the Vic, on sale Wed 7/10, 10 AM
Khemmis, Cloak, Huntsmen 7/26, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Lisa Lauren, Gregory Douglas 8/27, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM
Ledges, Corey Kilgannon, Jaclyn Heuser 8/24, 6:30 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Lex the Lexicon Artist, Super Smack 10/1, 6:30 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Leya, Damiana 8/14, 9:30 PM, Hideout
Lil Mosey 8/23, 7 PM, the Forge, Joliet
Eric Lugosch, Pat Donahue 10/6, 1 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM
Mac McNally 7/21, 8 PM, City Winery
Delbert McClinton, Gerald Dowd 9/21, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

Mega Bog 9/18, 9:30 PM, Hideout
Metalachi, Lucha Libre 8/2, 7:30 PM, Brauerhouse, Lombard
Mild High Club 10/23-10/24, 10 PM, Sleeping Village, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM
Mo Lowda & the Humble, Ona 10/12, 9 PM, Sleeping Village, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM
Mountain Movers, Junegrass, Traysh, DJ Eye Vybes 7/26, 9:30 PM, Hideout
Onuka 10/18, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall
Oranssi Pazuzu, Insect Ark 10/10, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club
Orchestral Interpretations of J Dilla, Kenny Keys 7/18, 6:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park
Joel Paterson 9/21, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM
CeCe Peniston 9/22, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 7/12, noon
Pixel Grip, None of Your Concern, Magin 9/2, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Pressure Kids, Flora, Shi La Rosa 8/26, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Resavoir, Yadda Yadda, Lake James 7/26, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village
RidgeFest day one with Hairbangers Ball, Infinity 7/25, 6:30 PM, Freedom Park, Chicago Ridge
RidgeFest day two with BoDeans 7/26, 6:30 PM, Freedom Park, Chicago Ridge
RidgeFest day three with Smash Mouth, Eric Chesser, Dreams, Dancing Noodles 7/27, 5:30 PM, Freedom Park, Chicago Ridge
Lucy Wainwright Roche 9/11, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM
Rolling Thunder-Dylan '75 8/21, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM
Rose of the West 9/12, 9 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM, 18+
Sacred Paws, Curls, Los Gold Fires 7/28, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+
Shallou, Upsahl 7/31, 9 PM, Chop Shop, 18+
Sarah Shook & the Disarmers, Senora May 10/11, 10 PM, Sleeping Village, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM
Sleep, Big Business 12/31, 10 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM
Sleep, Circuit des Yeux 12/29, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM, 17+
Sleep, Joshua Abrams's Natural Information Society 12/30, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM, 17+
Slow Bell Trio 8/11, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+

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Sneezy, Little Stranger 7/31, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+
Spun Out, Caroline Campbell, Noble Savage DJs 8/5, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Sunken Summer, Od Jo, Stone Chromatics 9/6, 8:30 PM, GMan Tavern
10 String Symphony 8/1, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Tiny Moving Parts, Fredo Disco, Standards 10/26, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 7/12, noon
Toko Telo 9/10, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Twista, Do or Die, Crucial Conflict 8/30, 8 PM, the Forge, Joliet
Volac, Phlegmatic Dogs 9/19, 10 PM, Sound-Bar, on sale Mon 7/15
Witt Lowry, Xuitcasecity 9/21, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 7/12, 10 AM, 17+
Wolf Eyes 9/19, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Zorila, One More Moon, Kevin Farris 9/7, 8:30 PM, GMan Tavern

UPDATED

Wildlife 11/7, 6 PM, Cobra Lounge, canceled, will be rescheduled at a future date. Refunds available at point of purchase.

UPCOMING

Arkells, Michigander 8/3, 11 PM, Sleeping Village
Gramps the Vamp, Deep Fayed, Family of Geniuses 7/24, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village
Grapetooth, Lala Lala, Title TK DJs 7/19, 10 PM, Metro, 18+
Great Peacock, Distant Brothers 7/18, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Green Velvet, Dajae 7/27, 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
It Looks Sad 8/6, 7 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Jamestown Revival, John Craigie 8/9, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Eilen Jewell 8/2, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Kindo, Sirintip, Adrian Bellue 8/8, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge
King Khan & BBQ Show 8/12, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Snail Mail, Tirzah 7/20, 10:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Wavves 7/28, 9 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Zo & Carmen Rodgers 8/8, 8 PM, City Winery



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

BELOVED LOCAL indie four-piece **Ne-Hi** only just announced their split via a May EP release, but former members are already breaking new ground! This week, Ne-Hi vets **Mikey Wells**, **James Weir**, and **Alex Otake** drop a self-titled debut single and video as **Spun Out**, who focus more on synthesizers and grooves than their predecessor. The song features Clay Frankel and Chris Bailoni of **Grapetooth**, and the trippy video (which seems to show Wells living inside a river bridge wearing Aladdin Sane-style makeup) is directed by local DJ and art collective **Noble Savage**. Wells says Spun Out have been recording with Joshua Wells from Destroyer behind the boards and collaborators such as Sean Page of **Mantra Blues** and **Deeper** bandmates Shiraz Bhatti and Nic Gohl. Spun Out play a free show at the **Empty Bottle** on Monday, August 5, with Caroline Campbell and Noble Savage.

In 2016, Jasmine A. Barber (aka rapper **J Bambi**) launched the **Brown Skin Lady Show**, an event series to showcase women of color. On Friday, July 12, the festivities hit the lake via an anniversary yacht party. It starts at **Navy Pier** and features sets by **Jean Deaux**, **Mother Nature**, **King Marie**, **Lisa Decibel**, the **Lab3l**, and **Coshe**. Tickets are available at bit.ly/bsls.y.

On Friday, July 12, Chicago DJ and acid-house producer **Terry Mullan** returns to **Smart Bar** for his final hometown show—earlier this year, he decided to retire from DJing. “I’m not that far out from turning 50 next year, and I’ve had a great run,” he says. A veteran of the midwest rave scene, Mullan came to fame in the 90s, partly through the material he released through his label, **Catalyst**, launched in 1996. Though he’s lived on the west coast for the past 20 years, he still reps Chicago hard—his Smart Bar set should be intense. “When I was a young rave wisenheimer, I had a residency on a weeknight there, and this is bringing things full circle,” Mullan says. “Couldn’t be more stoked.” —**J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL**

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.

OPINION

SAVAGE LOVE

Uncle Dan's guide to sticky situations

Jealous of a fiancé's best friend, stuck with a squicky kink, and more

By **DAN SAVAGE**

Q: My fiancé and I have been in a relationship for 11 years. His best friend is one of his exes, and that has always bothered me. What do I do? —**NEEDING GUIDANCE AFTER GETTING ENGAGED**

A: You could make up your mind to get over it, NGAGE. Or you could threaten to break off the engagement unless your fiancé cuts his best friend out of his life. That would be an asshole move—that would be an emotionally manipulative asshole power move. But, hey, you wouldn't be the first person to wait for the moment of maximum leverage before telling your partner that, despite what you led them to believe (or allowed them to assume), they are going to have to choose between their best friend(s) and the person they're about to marry or just married. Fair warning: If you issue that ultimatum and your fiancé (or husband) writes in and asks me what to do, I'm going to tell him to leave you.

Q: I'm a 58-year-old happily married gay man, and I have a well-hidden kink that I've had since childhood: I get off on destructive, city-smashing giants—think of Godzilla as a muscular man smashing things with his dick. Since this is impossible to realize, I rely on drawings and other images. After Tumblr removed the adult content, I found my way to newer websites. Some featured manga-style drawings of giant prepubescent boys. I've NEVER experienced any attraction to children, but these cartoons are a turn-on. Does lusting after cartoon

images of boys make me a pedophile? —**FREAKY EROTIC ART REQUIRES SERIOUS SELF-SCRUTINY**

A: If you aren't sexually attracted to children, FEARSSS, you aren't a pedophile. Pedophilia is not something a nonpedophile drifts into after viewing a little squicky manga. Pedophilia, according to the best and most current research, is a hardwired sexual orientation—one that can never be acted on for moral and ethical reasons. That said, I would urge you to avoid viewing or downloading this stuff. It's illegal in the United States (and lots of other places) to possess drawings or computer-generated images of children that depict "a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct," per federal law. I don't know whether your local prosecutor would

consider viewing drawings of giant prepubescent boys smashing buildings with their dicks as a criminal offense, but I'm sure you don't want to find out. Avoid those websites.

Q: I understand the pleasure received by the "suckee," but I need help understanding what benefit or pleasure the "sucker" derives from the exchange. Is it the taste of come? —**CONFUSION OVER COCKY KNOBLERS**

A: We do it for the glory, COCK, and that warm feeling that comes over us when we can look up and say, "Emission accomplished." (Sorry about that.)

Q: Where can a gal go to find reluctant/nonconsensual porn that isn't overly rapey? I really love power play (think "naughty secretary gets punished")—but ➔



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OPINION

continued from 37
when I look for reluctant/nonconsensual porn, I often come across male-perspective rape fantasies. I'd love to wank to a video or story about a woman reluctantly enjoying herself while her aggressor fucks her up the ass, but every search is fraught with the perils of finding something truly rapey. And that just makes me feel sad and icky. I'm willing to spend money if I trust the source. I just don't know where to look! Is the issue with my keywords? **Help! —REALLY ENJOYS SPECIFIC PORNOGRAPHIC E-CONTENT, THANKS**

A: "This is one of the things people don't understand about ethical and feminist porn—it's not just soft lighting and sweet lovemaking," said Tristan Taormino, the feminist author, sex educator, podcaster, and porn director (tristantaormino.com). "Ethical and feminist porn can also have an edge and feature power play, so long as there's consent. My series 'Rough Sex,' which has three volumes, is all about real women's kink fantasies, and there will be something in there for RESPECT (you can find it on gamelink.com). In addition, I recommend bellesa.co, where she can use the search term 'rough,' and xconfessions.com, where she should search for 'BDSM.'"

Q: I'm a 57-year-old man, and I have been in a relationship for ten months. I have some erection problems that are helped by ED meds. The issue is I haven't told my girlfriend I'm taking them. I take a pill when we are together "just in case," but this is costly, and the resulting lack of spontaneity makes me anxious. Also, I feel like I'm holding on to this secret. **—PLEASE SEND ADVICE**

A: Call your girlfriend. It's time you had the talk. Give her your reasons. Tell her it's not her fault—and, really, it's not her fault or yours. Men don't take boner pills because they aren't attracted to (or horny for) their partners, as some fear. The reality is quite the opposite: horny men take ED meds. She may need to hear it a few times before it sinks in, PSA, but you have nothing to be ashamed of. And if she enjoys the sex, she should be as grateful for these meds as you are—and she shouldn't want you to waste them any more than you do.

Q: I'm a bi guy in my late 20s. I date women and occasionally hook up with guys. In between, I have toys. My question has to do with something that happens when I'm using a dildo and stimulating my prostate: During intense stimulation

... I pee (I think)? My confusion lies in the fact that what comes out is clear and doesn't smell like urine. I know there's a debate about female squirting and whether it's urine, but I'm still very confused. But is this normal for a man? Should I worry? **—LEAKING EVERYWHERE AND KNOWING IT'S NOT GOOD**

A: Your dildo isn't just stimulating your prostate gland, which produces the milky fluid that comes flying out of your cock when you ejaculate, but your Cowper's glands as well. The Cowper's glands are located just under your prostate, and they produce a clear fluid, aka "pre-ejaculate" or "precome," that basically flushes out your urethra during arousal. Urine is acidic, and acids can harm sperm cells. So precome neutralizes whatever acids might be lurking in your urethra—basically, precome makes sure your urethra is a safe space for your sperm cells. Some men produce very little precome, some men produce buckets of it, and some men produce more under particular circumstances. Don't worry, LEAKING, just enjoy. **✎**

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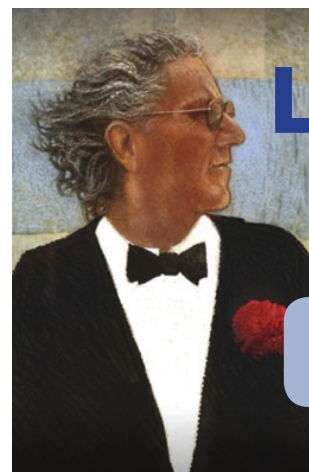
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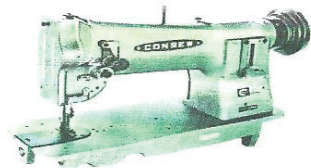
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